

Strengthening democracy through citizenship education and participation in times of
neoliberal ideology: Searching for an inclusive framework

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening democracy through citizenship education and participation in times of neoliberal ideology: Searching for an inclusive framework

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The neoliberal ideology is dramatically changing the field of education. By applying enterprise and market-oriented principles to education, neoliberalism has transformed the relation between students and educators. Educators see the precarization of their work conditions by increasing accountability because neoliberalism is based on the promise that education can be capitalized and result in better jobs. At the same time, citizens show high dissatisfaction with representative democracy. Citizens do not trust politicians and do not exercise their rights to vote in elections. Frustration with education, work, and focus on individualism and consumerism, lack of collective actions, absence of sense of community and apathy towards politics are all repercussions of neoliberalism. The purpose of this study is to find an inclusive framework that promotes critical citizenship education and participation. By analyzing the Participatory Budget model as it started in Porto Alegre, Brazil, we could see that the more people participate in direct democracy and see the results, the more they want to participate. From a study of the application of the Participatory Budget in schools, we learned that the more people learn how to participate, the more they participate. Through citizenship education and participation in deliberation and decision-making processes, people develop political critical awareness, increased sense of community and emancipation and this is a tremendous antidote to neoliberal policies. The tango between critical citizenship education and participation in deliberation and decision-making processes promotes social justice and develops a strong form of democracy where marginalized voices are heard and the status quo is challenged.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Nivio Sanches and Vera Lúcia Fernandes Sanches who have always encouraged and supported my education and my dreams.

TABLE OF CONTENT

ABSTRACT.....		iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....		iv
DEDICATION.....		v
TABLE OF CONTENT.....		vi
LIST OF IMAGES.....		vii
Chapter 1	Introduction, statement of the problem, research questions and literature review on the impact of the neoliberal paradigm on education.....	1
Chapter 2	Definitions of democracy and democratic citizenship education.....	27
Chapter 3	An example of a tool to promote citizenship education and strengthen democracy.....	43
Chapter 4	Summary and presentation of a critical theoretical framework to strengthen democracy through citizenship education and participation.....	65
REFERENCES.....		80

LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1. Archon Fung's Democracy Cube.....	46
Image 2. The cycle of the Participatory Budgeting.....	54
Image 3. Summary of the Theoretical Framework	77

Chapter 1

Introduction, statement of the problem and literature review on the impact of the neoliberal paradigm on education

*“Conscientização represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness”
(Freire, 1983, p. 15)*

In the book, *Pedagogy of the Heart*, Freire (1997) explains that “curiosity achieved by an educational practice reduced to pure technique may be an anesthetized curiosity, one that does not go past a scientific position before the world” (p. 100). The reduction of curiosity to pure technique is part of a project whose focus is to transform the world and education into a consumer market. The ideology behind this project is what we call neoliberalism.

Neoliberalism is a political economic paradigm where private interests and individualism reign over social life. Neoliberal initiatives promote free market policies that encourage private enterprise and consumer choice. It is an ideology that transfers the responsibility from the public sector (State) to the private domain (individual). Education is no longer a right but it becomes a privilege. A privilege for the ones who can afford it. Individuals are seen as the only responsible ones for their own success through meritocracy. Consequently, there is an increase in social and economic inequalities as the world becomes increasingly divided between the haves and have-nots.

The commodification of the education and the transformation of the teacher-student relationship into a consumer relation are examples of how pervasive the neoliberal ideology is and how far it has already gone. Tensions between students, teachers and parents have become incredibly high and discouraging. Parents and students believe that they are paying for a product and therefore they act as they should demand and mold education for their own

pleasure. They want education delivered as they please. Teachers have become performers for an audience of paying spectators. This individualistic and consumerist project of society is destroying our sense of community. I have noticed recently in my conversations with classmates and professors that even speaking about our rights, citizenship, democracy, and community has become difficult and old-fashioned. In a polarized society, like the one we are living in now, it is more and more difficult to strive for social justice, democratic principles and citizenship education because all the focus is on education for the job market. I believe that citizenship education can be a strong force to resist neoliberalism and foster change by strengthening citizenship and democracy.

The neoliberal ideology has been the underpinning of social and economic transformations since 1970s and in economic terms, it is premised upon the following principles: private enterprise, entrepreneurship, competition, free markets, accountability, and small government (Harvey, 2005). One of the main goals of neoliberalism is to transform the society into a consuming economy where capitalism can achieve its full potential. Apple (2006a) alerts us that the neoliberal and neoconservative ideologies have diverse goals. One of these goals is the transformation of the society into a consuming society by promoting free market, free trade, globalization, a laissez-faire state, and the self-interested individual. Consequently, the sense of community and the collective thought became a barrier and an impediment to the neoliberal ideology. It is almost impossible to promote democratic principles, citizenship education and social justice because the neoliberal focus is on individualism, and we are disconnected from the communal values. We even tend to see the other as a product to be used for our own purposes. We start believing that we can buy anything and the dehumanization of the relationships and of the education becomes evident. It is the destruction of any sense of community or collective thought.

To create this consumption society, it is necessary as Apple (2006a) teaches us “to change people’s understanding of themselves as members of collective groups” (p. 23). It means that people are not considered as members of a community anymore but as individual consumers who must satisfy their own interests and desires. This creates an environment, a world, where it is normal to have winners and losers, where people are constantly competing with each other for the latest product, for the best restaurant, the exclusive commodity, for anything that can make them distinguished from the others. It is a world where the main purpose is to keep the privileged position of the ones who already have them without challenging the status quo. Education becomes training. Students and teacher go into this horrible relationship where it has been promised that through education students will get the best jobs. Therefore, students look for education in order to achieve the best job and teachers are judged for their ability to perform in training the best students for the best jobs. Consequently, teachers work under terrible and unfair pressure and are accountable if students do not succeed in standardized tests or find the best jobs.

It is important to say that job training is part of education and one of its purposes. We want to have a professional life and for this we need to have jobs, there is no questioning about that. The problem is when this is the only focus of education and when it takes the place of democratic principles and denies the importance of community in education. Austerity measures have brought reductions in funding for democratic initiatives, adult education centers and therefore citizenship education has lost its importance. In schools, with the implementation and expansion of standardized tests, overvalued subjects such as math and sciences have taken the place of social subjects. However, the most serious problem is that market values have been transforming schools, community centers, and high education institutions into enterprises. These places are seen as companies and need to be managed as one. Unfortunately, there is a trend towards an overvaluation of anything that can be

translated into commercial and capitalized values in detriment to social values such as social justice and community.

As neoliberalism destroys the sense of community and instills in people an unnecessary sense of competition, we become more individualist and distrust the public good. Trust in democratic values has been decreasing as people do not get involved in the community anymore. Elections, voting and participation are very low and indifference and disbelief in politics increase. Apathy is on the rise. I believe that to reverse this scenario it is important to promote participation. Participation can unlock apathy. Citizens who participate develop a sense of community and improve their lives and their neighborhoods. The Participatory Budget is an interesting example of how to promote participation. Its principles can be applied in several different levels of government such as municipal or in different institutions such as universities, schools and adult education centers. When we include different voices in the decisions through direct participation, people understand all the aspects that are involved in their lives, as they learn to participate they participate more, and participating makes them develop their citizenship and their sense of belonging to a community.

My personal interest in the topic

I have always been very passionate about democratic education. I am originally from Brazil in South America. Brazil has been going through some very critical moments that have put its democracy at risk. A new government, which recently took power without elections, has been making significant changes in the policies that guaranteed rights after the military dictatorship. As part of the democratization process, the 1988 Constitution widely known as the *Constituição Cidadã* [Citizen Constitution] was created to promote social change in a country that had been devastated by totalitarianism and stricken by poverty. However, this new government, widely inspired by neoliberalism, has been cutting many social programs, and has now implemented policies that are aligned with a neoliberal agenda that has imposed

austerity and increased privatization of public resources, and installed a neoliberal right-wing program that has never been submitted to voting through general elections. They have abolished the ministry of women, racial equality and human rights. They have also replaced a diverse and representative administration with a cabinet made up mostly of white men. United Nations (UN) representative Philip Alston (2016) has recently alerted, in an interview, that these new measures violate human rights and have no compassion for poor people as they drastically reduce investment in many areas, especially education.

This new government is supported by three parliamentary groups (both present in the lower and higher houses of parliament), which is widely known as the 3Bs: bible (evangelical sector), bull (livestock sector), and bullet (gun sector). To remain in power, they make polemic concessions to these groups, such as removing the status of indigenous areas so that cattle farming can advance and destroy forests to make grassland for livestock, privatization of oil resources previously protected by law, policies against the LGBT rights, and policies against the disarmament of the population. I would like to address one particular project of law created and defended primarily by the evangelical sector that is what they call *Escola Sem Partido* something that could be translated as School without political parties.

Escola Sem Partido has self-proclaimed as being a neutral movement against political ideologies of right or left. However, a closer analysis shows that they have a very clear right wing agenda that has created projects of law in all levels of the Brazilian society (Municipal, State, and Federal). These projects of law criminalize teachers who attempt to indoctrinate students with their own ideologies. Teachers are not allowed to talk about their political, religious, or moral convictions. This project will prevent any dialogue to take place in the public schools because the teachers will not be allowed to discuss and present to the students any topic related to politics, religion, gender, or sex education. This project of law will create schools without critical thinking, which go against the principles of a democratic school. The

teachers will be accountable and treated like criminals who indoctrinate and manipulate students with a political agenda. This law states that a teacher must not teach anything else than the technical subjects. *Escola Sem Partido* is part of a neoliberal agenda because it originates from the principle that education is for the job market. Teachers will not be allowed to talk about anything happening in the world or contextualize their teachings with any social aspects.

If approved at the Federal level, this project of law would be a tragedy for the working class students because they are the ones who depend on the public school system. Historically in Brazil, the working class students have been suffering from getting poor education with very low quality schools. Teachers in the public sector earn low salaries and have precarious working conditions dealing with poverty and violence in a daily basis. The elite and middle class normally enroll their children in private schools, which have freedom to teach whatever they like and would not be bound to obey this law. In his book *Pedagogy of Freedom*, Freire (1994) brilliantly tells us what he would think of such a project, “I do not see why I should omit or hide my political stance by proclaiming a neutral position that does not exist. On the contrary, my role as a teacher is to assent the students’ right to compare, to choose, to rupture, to decide” (p. 48) and further on he continues,

“For this reason I do not accept (because it is not possible) the ingenuous or strategically neutral position often claimed by people in education or by those who study biology, physics, sociology, or mathematics. No one can be in the world, with the world, and with others and maintain a posture of neutrality. I cannot be in the world decontextualized, simply observing life” (p. 53).

I believe that this project and many others being implemented in Brazil at the moment have the neoliberal ideology as the underpin. It is absolutely necessary to study this

phenomena and take a position against it because of the risk it brings for democracy and education. I truly believe that promoting citizenship education through participation has the potential to bring light back to education and promote comprehension of what is happening in the world and what we can do to overcome those issues.

Problem Statement

One of the main strategies of the neoliberal ideology is to change the system of education. It is an important area for neoliberalism because it is where the next generations are formed. Neoliberal advocates see it as a way of perpetuating their ideology. Educational institutions are being dismantled by the state. Neoliberals use a common and accepted discourse that educational institutions are disconnected from the needs of the market and are not forming students who are ready to be hired by companies to justify their policies.

According to neoliberal policies, the focus of education switches from the formation of the human beings for their potential to contribute to their community and democracy and are directed towards education for the market focused on the development of human capital. Apple (2006b) gives the idea of what human capital means by saying that “the world is intensely competitive economically, and students – as future workers – must be given the requisite skills and dispositions to compete efficiently and effectively” (p. 32).

In this model, democracy is seen as consumption practices. People consume not because they need but because they want to differentiate themselves in relation to others. Usher, Bryant and Johnson (1997) teach us that the consumer culture brought changes to adult education because more and more adults are consuming goods and services. Policy makers have the views of citizens as consumers, and “educational activities have become consumer goods in themselves, purchased as the result of choice, by free agents with a marketplace where educational products compete with leisure and entertainment products” (p. 16).

If students are consumers, then education is a product to be provided by the schools, universities, and adult education centers and in consequence by educators. This view of education changes the relationship between learners, parents, educators, and educational institution. As education is a product, students want the product they are paying for without efforts and have strong feelings of immediacy. They want their education for now and the way they want it. So educational practices that are valued are the ones where educators are able to entertain their students so that they are satisfied with the service and final product they are being provided with.

As a result, educators are overwhelmed with increasing pressure and accountability for their students' learning and satisfaction. On top of that, because of lack of funds, higher education institutions, schools, and adult education centers have to increase the number of students in their classes, investing less in structure, giving less support for educators, and increasing the amount of work. In this scenario, good teachers are the ones who have resilience and uncritically adapt themselves to this new reality. Teachers and professors who do not have tenure and do not comply with the new reality imposed on them are normally seen as not adaptable and not good enough for the institution while tenure teachers and professors are seen as trouble makers because they resist the imposition of the neoliberal policies.

Research Questions

It seems clear to me that the neoliberal imposition of education to shift towards a consumer society is the perpetuation of what Freire (1970) calls "banking education" that is a mechanistic type of education where students are passive receptors of education. The neoliberal view is opposed to a dialectical education that promotes critical dialogue between the reading of the word and the reading of the world towards *conscientização* [political critical awareness]. It is important to make a difference here because the neoliberal advocates

value critical thinking but not in the sense Freire is teaching us. For them, critical thinking is valued only if it works towards the market in the process of making decisions that increase profits and cut expenses.

Given the education situation in this neoliberal reality, it seems to me that we are engaged in a course that poses a huge challenge and is difficult to reverse. I sometimes feel pessimistic and angry about it and question myself if we have already reached the point of no return. However, it is imperative to keep the hope high. Again, it is Freire (1998) who comforts us,

“I have a right to be angry, to show it and to use it as a motivational foundation for my struggle, just as I have a right to love and to express my love to the world and to use it as motivational foundation for my struggle because I live in history at a time of possibility and not of determinism. If reality were pure determinism because it was thus decided or planned, there would be no reason at all to be angry. My right to be angry presupposes that the historical experience in which I participate tomorrow is not a given but a challenge and a problem. My just anger is grounded in any indignation in the face of the denial of the rights inherent in the very essence of the human condition” (p. 51).

I propose to investigate the influence of neoliberal ideologies in education and how this paradigm has been consolidating itself more and more powerfully worldwide. I also aim at recommending a critical theoretical framework to restore and promote citizenship education.

My research questions are:

- How is the neoliberal paradigm changing the relationship between educators and students in the present market and consumption oriented context?

- What actions should be taken by decision makers and practitioners engaged in citizenship education in order to strengthen democracy?

Literature Review

Neoliberalism and education

Discourses and practices of neoliberalism have been shaping the way education works. Olssen and Peters (2005) argue that the central defining characteristics of neoliberalism are: (1) The self-interested individual – a view of individuals as economically self-interested subjects; (2) Free market economics – the best way to allocate resources and opportunities is through the market; (3) A commitment to laissez-faire – because the free market is a self-regulating order, it regulates itself better than any outside force or the government; (4) A commitment to free trade – involving the abolition of tariffs or subsidies, or any form of state-imposed protection or support; (5) A positive conception of the state's role in creating the appropriate market by providing the conditions, laws and institutions necessary for its operation.

Neoliberals are guided by a vision of the weak state. Private is necessarily good and public is somewhat bad. In the neoliberal view, public institutions waste money that could be going to private enterprises. The idea of the consumer is crucial for neoliberalism. Democracy is turned into consumption practices. The postmodern context we live now emphasizes diversity and plurality; people are consuming technology as never before; they are always willing to have the latest technology, the newest model, and this paradigm benefits those who have the economic and cultural capital.

In the neoliberal state, the government is not responsible for the collective anymore as the duty to provide health, education, and jobs are transferred to the individual. It is an ideology that destroys collectivity as it only recognizes individuals.

Another very important aspect of neoliberalism is that neoliberals support the idea that the State should not intervene in the economy and that trained experts (technical specialists) should restructure the economy and the institutions of the State in order to promote free market principles (competition, efficiency, innovation). This should be done by redefining the social relations from a community and collective sense into one of competitive individualism and consumerism. For neoliberals, the people should feel individually responsible for their own failure or success through meritocracy. As we can see, neoliberals do not necessarily advocate for democracy since politicians are not trained experts to be able to make important decisions in the society. In the neoliberal logic, the State exists only to make sure that free market principles are secured. Neoliberal economic reforms provoke recession, unemployment or precarious work (as workers lose their job security by the deregulation and undermining of labor laws), concentration of wealth on the hands of few and enlarging the abyss between the haves and have-nots (Nylen, 2003).

Neoliberal states are strong in protecting the market powers and the owners of the capital, but they are negligent with the public good and slow in responding to the needs of the poor (as they are poor because of their own fault). Neoliberalism destroys the sense of community because the have-nots are considered failures and therefore, unworthy of sympathy or solidarity. The State is seen as a problem and unable to resolve the problems in the society. Consequently, more free market principles need to be adopted to make sure individualism and consumerism will make the trick. However, what we see is more deterioration and frustration, more people feeling they are failures, more people blaming others for their poverty, and less help from the State as the market self-regulatory principles are like magic. The promise of achieving the perfect job through an expensive process of market-oriented education does not necessarily come true. This vicious cycle generates civic disengagement and frustration with democratic institutions. The dissatisfaction with

democracy gives space to the surge of anti-democratic tendencies, such as neo-Nazism groups, anti-immigration movements, and anti-politics discourses. That is why many democratic societies are being undermined by neoliberalism.

Between neoliberalism and neoconservatism

Apple (2006b) warns us that the neoliberalism is closely related to neoconservatism. While neoliberalism focuses on market values, neoconservatism pushes on policies that promote “correct” knowledge, norms, and values. Both neoliberalism and neoconservatism come out of the assumptions that the education does not prepare students to compete in the job market and that the Western world is losing its conservative values. Apple (2006b) teaches us that in the USA and UK there are four groups that are frequently connected to neoliberalism and neoconservatism ideas: (a) dominant neoliberal economic and political elites who wants to modernize the economy and separate themselves from the rest of the population in a binary oppositional way (we versus them, we being us who follow the law, work hard, and have correct values, and they as being a threat to the society, lazy, immoral, and permissive). It is important to notice that neoliberal and neoconservative policies exclude marginalized people (indigenous people, women, the poor, people of color, and others) from their policies in order to protect themselves as they are real citizens; (b) economic and cultural neoconservatives who strive to keep “standard” high values; (c) some working class and middle class who worry about security, family and traditional knowledge and values because they are constantly bombarded with concerns of fear of losing what they have, losing standards, violence, and fall into the domain of traditionalism, standardization, productivity, marketization, and economic needs; (d) the new middle class whose professional interests go towards neoliberalism policies.

The politics of Reform

Apple (2006b) continues to explain that one of the many explanations of the increase of neoliberal reforms is the connection of education and market values. The justification is that education needs to be closely related to the need of the economy and companies should define the curriculum of schools, universities, adult education centers in order to meet the needs of economy. Anything that is not job or market related and has no importance for companies in order to get a future job is discarded or discontinued. Emphasis is given to subjects and areas that have commercial values. This obviously affects the position that people have in the society and see themselves as competitors losing their collective sense of community membership. Apple (2006b) reinforces the idea that neoliberalism is often accompanied by a neoconservative agenda in search of restoring traditional values.

Can we challenge neoliberal and neoconservative policies?

It is imperative to challenge neoliberal and neoconservative policies. It is important to find solutions that promote democratic values and protect the marginalized population. The notion that citizenship is reduced to consumption practices in a thin democracy needs to be challenged. Citizenship is much more than consumption and education has a crucial role to connect community and educational initiatives. Apple (2006b) gives the example of two initiatives in Brazil (Participatory Budgeting and Citizen School) that can promote this connection between education and community and go beyond the neoliberal consumption citizenship model. One of these examples, the Participatory Budgeting initiative, started in Porto Alegre in the south of Brazil and enables citizens to participate in deliberations over policies and decisions on how the municipal money should be used. This kind of collective participation strengthens citizenship and democratic values.

I will further analyze the Participatory Budget in this paper. Apple (2006b) says that “Porto Alegre has demonstrated that it is possible to have a ‘thicker’ democracy, even in times of both economic crisis and ideological attacks from neoliberal parties and the

conservative press” (p. 25). It is undeniable the pedagogic function of the Participatory Budgeting initiative. People develop a collective sense of belonging and learn how to engage in their own communities taking the control of their own lives. The participatory characteristics of this initiative changes the relationship between citizens, students, parents, school administrators, the state and education because it creates a sense of responsibility towards the community. People know how much it costs to build a bridge or to build a health center, students know how their school functions and therefore take the responsibility to preserve and promote public education.

Limitations of the student-as-consumer metaphor

McMillan and Cheney (1996) analyzed the limitations of the student-as-consumer metaphor in higher education that can certainly relate to other educational institutions and need to be considered:

1. When students are seen as consumers there is excessive distance between the student and the educational process. Students do not feel responsible for their educational organization. They may face education just as when they buy a product at a store and the relationship of school administrators and teachers tend to be similar to the relationship between a CEO and the employees, and there is a risk of many managerial impositions to affect the roles of educators such as pressure to approve students, for instance;

2. It promotes competition among educators through excessive self-promotional activities to compete for students and please the administration and at the same time, teachers are seen as entertainers who have to teach by making students laugh. McMillan and Cheney (1996) teaches that no one is arguing that educators can not promote their careers or should not make their classes interesting and entertaining, the problem is “when pressure toward self-promotion and entertainment come to dominate the educational experience, then we should begin to worry” (p. 7);

3. The student-as-consumer metaphor compartmentalizes the educational experience as a product opposed to a process. Students become passive consumers waiting for a product to be delivered. With the increasing focus on employability, students expect that the educational institutions deliver a program that will give them a job at the end. However, this is not how education works because students are co-constructors of knowledge and not passive recipients. It is impossible not to link this relationship between students and education in the consumer metaphor to what Freire (1970) called banking education, he taught us that “in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (p. 72);

4. The student-as-consumer metaphor reinforces individualism at the expense of community.

The neoliberal conception of education and its consequences: human capital versus human potential

Connell (2013) says that “neoliberalism broadly means the agenda of economic and social transformation under the sign of the free market. It also means the institutional arrangements to implement this project that have been installed, step by step, in every society under neoliberal control” (p. 100). It is interesting to note that the neoliberalism’s agenda is to commodify everything that is possible. In many countries, it has already been successful in commodifying things that would be improbable before such as drinking water, body parts, and social welfare (Connell, 2013). In the neoliberal logic, the expansion of the market leads to a decrease of public spending and consequently a reduction in taxes. In 1978, the passing of Proposition 13 in California put a cap in property taxes causing a crisis in funding of public schools. Taxing on wealth and on high incomes has dropped considerably in the OECD governments (Connell, 2013). It was in Chile that neoliberalism was firstly implemented and started gaining political terrain. In the right-wing Pinochet military

dictatorship, the neoliberal economists, tutored by the University of Chicago, replaced an agenda of democratization and state-led industrialization with a neoliberal regime. The Thatcher and Reagan neoliberal regimes promoted neoliberalism as the only possibility and spread it through the world by institutions such as IMF, World Bank and their Structural Adjustment Programs. Structural Adjustment is the name given to a set of "free market" economic policy reforms imposed on developing countries by the Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF)) as a condition for receipt of loans.

Connell (2013) says that “the commodification of services and the privatization of public sector agencies demand institutional and cultural change. The profit-seeking corporation is promoted as the admired model for the public sector, and for much of civil society too” (p. 101). This business model became transferable to all sectors of the society. Business principles such as accountability and auditing were applied to private and public institutions along with an emphasis on labour market flexibility that caused an increase on precarization of jobs and put pressure on unions. In North America and Europe, neoliberalism dismantled the Keynesian welfare state that intended to offset the business cycles of capitalism by deficit spending in recessionary periods to promote public works, state-supplied services and unemployment insurance (Connell, 2013).

For the neoliberal logic, education is seen as human capital development. Basically, in this logic, education became the process of training people for skills needed by the market economy. Bouchard (2006) defines human capital by saying that “the main idea is that although humans possess tangible financial capital such as bank accounts and stocks, they are also the repository of knowledge, skills, and qualities that can also be considered capital” (p. 165). It seems very difficult to measure the value of human capital by depositing knowledge on the students’ minds (Freire’s banking education). Bouchard (2006, p. 167) asks some key questions about human capital: how do we know what kind of knowledge will be important

by the end of someone's education? How do we know what will be the necessary knowledge a few years from now? Does education actually improve a person's economic productivity, or does it just separate low earners from high earners by acting as a selection criterion?

Focusing all efforts on economically viable knowledge for a knowledge-based economy is very dangerous because there are other kinds of knowledge that are very important for the society that are not marketable.

According to the OECD (1996), knowledge based economies in very general terms are "those which are directly based on the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information" (p. 7). By examining Canadian federal employment and training policies, Gibb and Walker (2013) identified four pervasive discourses on the knowledge based economy ideology that affect practices of adult educators. The base of these discourses are the neoliberal and the knowledge-based economy ideologies. These ideologies have transformed adult education. It went from a civil society activity focused on community concerns to become more economically directed to employability.

The four discourses that Gibb and Walker (2013) found were: (a) economies need to invest on the production and distribution of knowledge to remain competitive and continue transforming into a knowledge economy; (b) knowledge is becoming more and more codified and transmitted through technology so it is essential to have a workforce capable of producing and interpreting codified knowledge; (c) education is responsible for training the workforce into the knowledge economy by developing human capital to increase the individual's economic productivity; and finally, (d) increasing demand for highly skilled workers. These assumptions are problematic because it sees knowledge as a resource and commodity and not all knowledge can be codified (Gibb and Walker, 2013, p. 262-265).

Human capital is also contradictory because there is no guarantee that you will get higher salaries or become more productive because you get higher education. It is also

complicated to define what a high skill job is compared to low skill jobs. The notion of knowledge economy and human capital are embedded in neoliberal ideology, it is contradictory to education that is based on democratic citizenship principles.

If you look at education in the perspective of the knowledge-based economy and human capital then education has the status of a commodity, a product that can be bought to increase a person's value. However, this is very problematic because this perspective is based on neoliberal ideologies and has several issues that normally goes without being examined. If the human capital is part of the person, the knowledge belongs to the person and can not be detached from them, and each person responds differently to education and not necessarily will apply the "knowledge" equally. Human capital disappears when someone dies and it can not be transferred to someone else. The discourse of intrinsic economic value of education is problematic because it is a matter of its marketable value rather than saying it has real economic value. This new tendency is frequently embraced uncritically. Educators must question and challenge the link between education and economic theory. The discourse of training for the job market should not be accepted as the only way to succeed in life without questioning.

In a study about Adult Education in Quebec, known as the Rapport Jean (1982) it is stated that the emphasis in education should not be on the development of human capital but on the development of the human potential. The emphasis on human potential contrasts with human capital because its focus is not only economic but also on the human being as a whole. Jean says « *L'éducation est un processus qui se poursuit tout au long de la vie. Aussi, l'éducation des adultes ne saurait être axée uniquement sur des considérations d'ordre économique ; elle doit aussi viser l'épanouissement global de la personne* » (p. 14). It is amazing how the report emphasizes that the development of the human potential (not human capital) is the basis of the adult education because « *il signifie pour les individus et les*

groups: apprendre à identifier, organiser et exercer son pouvoir sur sa vie de tous les jours » (p. 14).

Connell (2013) explains that it is important to bring history to the concept of education. If we do so, we can understand education as “the social process in which we nurture and develop capacities for practice. ... Education involves encounter between persons and that encounter involves care” (p. 104). Education is a social process and reducing it to human capital is to oversimplify it. It is necessary to consider the complexity of the educational process such as class, gender, ethnic, color, and other structures. Connell (2013) teaches us that education is “inherently socially inclusive” (p. 105) and if it becomes a privilege it is because we failed to recognize and combat the presence of power and corrupted relations.

Consequences of the neoliberal agenda for teachers and educators

Education has become a very difficult endeavor. Teachers are feeling overwhelmed with larger classes, more responsibility, less structure, less support, and more work. Many teachers who are beginning their careers abandon their jobs and leave the field. Causation and attrition are real issues nowadays. Causation happens when a teacher who had a full-time job loses their position and is forced into casual jobs. Their jobs become very unstable. Attrition is the decrease in the number of people who enter the profession and persist, normally finding jobs in other areas.

Resilience is a term that became a construct and is very used nowadays to refer to teachers who go over all this trouble but bounce back, recover from these situations and persist in their careers. In this neoliberal paradigm, we all live nowadays, it is very important to have a critical perspective on constructs like that, because they end up putting more responsibility over the teachers' shoulders. Price, Mansfield & McConney (2012) say that a simple definition of resilience is normally conceived as “successful adaptation despite

challenging or threatening circumstances” (p.83). However, a critical perspective on this definition questions what successful adaptation and threatening circumstances are.

Price et al. mention that a critical view of resilience would see it as socially constructed. A common use of resilience is on business training. Employees, managers are more and more stressed because they have to do more with less; there is more pressure to produce more in less time. Instead of questioning the neoliberal condition that is not human, resilience is used as a form of social control. Therefore, resilient employees are the ones who can “overcome” difficult situations and adapt to a new reality. The ones who can adapt are considered to be fit and resilient.

Price et al. summarized the characteristics a teacher should have to be considered resilient according to the dominant construct in the literature. A resilient teacher is someone who (a) has a strong sense of self-efficacy; (b) is highly motivated; (c) has moral purpose; (d) is flexible; (e) has a sense of humor; (f) can work collaboratively with others; and (g) has an effective administrative team and supportive peers.

However, Price et al. underline that this kind of list can be used to inform teacher education curriculum and to establish teacher professional standards and we should have a critical eye when we discuss resilience. The characteristics associated with the idea of resilience are not neutral. Actually, as Price et al. teach us they “are developed through a complex, socially situated network of experiences and understandings and are often informed by hegemonic discourses that emerge through the media, research and public policy” (p. 86).

Teachers’ identities are formed and shaped by words and established constructs. These assumed words, such as good teacher, competent teacher, and resilient teacher normally carry a strong market-oriented perspectives and assumptions that have the potential to impact on teachers’ work and education. These neoliberal constructs transfer to the

teachers the burdens to teach in adverse conditions and remove the responsibilities from the government and policy makers.

Why teachers' work is so adverse

According to labor process theories, teachers are workers, teaching is work and the school is a workplace. Current discourse describe teachers' job and workplace as adverse. Building on notions of control, Reid (2003) teaches that in a Capitalist economic system, control needs to be exercised over workers in order to maximize profit and production by asking teachers to do more in less time and with fewer resources. There is also an increase in part-time work and casualization.

Neoliberal education agendas according to Burbulus and Torres (2000) are characterized by "particular policies for evaluation, financing, assessment, standards, teacher training, curriculum, instructions and testing" (p.15). Price et al (2015) argue that if teachers and teacher educators are conscious about the way that the neoliberal agenda works in relation to constructs like teacher resilience, good teachers, and that these constructs can influence in their professional identity and their work, teachers can better resist them and be empowered to negotiate and stand up to the neoliberal discourse.

How neoliberalism makes teachers' work environment more adverse by using control

Cleary (2015) argues that, "neoliberalism maintained traditional liberalism's faith in the free market as a natural and moral determinant of an individual's fate, as well as its indignation for the welfare system and welfare recipients" (p.01). Traditional conservative theory saw individuals as naturally self-interested in the free market while the neoliberalism sees the human beings as lazy and needed to be manipulated by the state in order to be more productive citizen, and contribute to the free-market society.

Discussing education reforms in New Zealand, Olssen (1996) points out three reforms that he argues are neoliberal reforms. The first reform is the decentralization of power. Local schools have responsibilities over personnel and managing decisions. The second point is the elimination of school zoning. Parents could choose the school where their children would study not by the place where they lived but by the performance of the schools. The third one was the creation of two national regulatory bodies to watch and monitor teachers. If teachers are left on their own they would be lazy and selfish. That is why they developed an accountability system.

Olssen says that the first two reforms are according to classical liberals because they removed barriers to the free-market and developed a relationship of producer and consumer between parents/students and teachers/schools. However, what made the reforms neoliberal was the centralization of the control over the teachers. Classic liberals would not agree with the state presence controlling the production of the teachers, while neoliberals claim that the control is essential to keep human beings on track and coerced into productivity, normally measured by standardized test results and graduation rates.

Cleary (2015) defines professional autonomy as “the extent to which one is free to perform their job according to their own definition of success in that position, and through actions of their choosing toward achieving that vision of success” (p.6). Cleary claims that the more professional autonomy a teacher has the happier and healthier a teacher will be, even student achievement improve with teacher’s professional autonomy (professionalization). Cleary argues that there are teachers who have more professional autonomy than others do. According to Cleary, teachers who work in poorer schools have less professional autonomy than teachers who work in wealthier schools.

Neoliberal policies promoting school effects or school selection?

Analyzing two high schools in the USA, Cleary (2015) reports that one public school with most of its students coming from wealthy families select students based on their GPAs. Students who can not keep up with a high GPA do not stay there, that is why their standardized test are higher than in other public schools where the majority of students come from poor families. These schools do not select students based on their GPA and normally 'lose' their brighter students to high schools that advertise better GPA test results.

This research shows that the neoliberal system of education does not work because instead of making schools improve they are just selecting highly achieving students. Schools that are faster and smarter to attract brighter students are the ones that will survive because such schools will be better classified.

Schools that receive additional Federal funds have a higher level of accountability and are forced to conform to "new forms of vigilance, surveillance, performance appraisal and of forms of control generally" (Olssen, 1996 as cited in Cleary, 2015). Schools with higher GPAs do not count on receiving Federal funds because they attract non-governmental funding sources. It means that they have a much higher level of autonomy and do not have to conform to external control. Teachers in these schools experience a much higher level of professional autonomy because they do not suffer from high levels of control compared to the teachers in poorer schools. Teachers from poorer schools have less professional autonomy and consequently worse quality of life tending to quit the profession. Cleary (2015) concludes that these low socioeconomic schools lack the conditions that are necessary for fair competition because all participants do not begin at the same starting point.

School choice as a way of improving education in a neoliberal society

Choice is the key element of the neoliberal policy. Angus (2015) reports that in Australia the government has created a website where all schools are listed according to

standardized test results. The promise is that the imposition of market pressure and competition will result in an increase of school standards as parents-customers shop around for the best schools. Angus notices that it is interesting that “this way of looking at the world, in which education is subordinate to the economy, has become seemingly normalized” (p.399).

Consequently, this emphasis on individualism, commodification and market transferred the responsibility of ‘poor’ student performance in standardized test to the responsibility of individual schools and teachers, and bad parental choices rather than a consequence of sociopolitical, cultural and economic factors. What the ranking does not show is that schools in a desperate attempt to be classified in the highest ranks started selecting the best students, choosing to enroll already high performance students excluding those considered ‘less capable’.

Obviously, the students who perform better are the ones who come from middle class and have a high level of cultural capital and characteristics desired by the school systems. Privileged parents are more likely to employ tutors to coach their children. Davies and Guppy (2014) argue that, “school attainment is strongly influenced by students’ socio-economic background, pre-existing cognitive abilities, parents’ education, [and] region of birth” (p.252). In this neoliberal paradigm, are schools preparing students or just selecting the most prepared ones to pass standardized tests? Did the high ranked schools achieve it because of “school effects” or “selection effects”?

Another important aspect brought by Smyth et al. (2008) is that working-class families have a strong connection with their local community, especially with the local schools. Local schools are important social institutions in working-class neighborhoods and people who live in such areas will rarely be successful in competing with students in affluent

neighborhoods for high ranked schools. Positioning parents as consumers of education, giving them choice of schools according to ranking lists give us the impression of democracy and option, however, underprivileged families are excluded from this process as their social and cultural capital do not meet the consumerist norms. In reality, this system discriminate against less-privileged families who are already disadvantaged within the education system.

A Canadian example of school choice as a tool of keeping privileges

Yoon and Gulson (2010) investigated two elementary schools in Vancouver, Canada. These schools were located in the same neighborhood just a few blocks away from each other. They found out that School A had 13% of non-English as a second language (ESL) speakers (non-ESL = native speakers of English) while School B had 60.3% of non-ESL students. Why language? What does it have to do with neoliberalism? A lot. Actually, in a multilingual society like Canada, native speakers of English are considered inheritors of a dominant linguistic capital in a privileged position with a sense of national belonging (Hage, 2000).

In a post-colonial society just like Canada, to speak the language of the colonizer has been associated to being white and privileged and owning the linguistic and social capital required for success and acceptance. In contrast, non-White speakers of other languages need to be accepted and tolerated as they are considered as having a social and cultural capital that do not correspond to the dominant and desired one. Parents look for schools where the majority of the students will be white English native speakers because they feel that if their children acquire the cultural and linguistic capital they will be successful and accepted.

Yoon and Gulson (2010) reported that, “choosing the right school that can fulfil their socio-linguistically privileged position in their imagined nation is thus paramount for parents in the inner city of multi-ethnic areas like Vancouver” (p.707). It is important to say that the

choice of a school based on ethnicity and dominant language is not neutral, parents want to keep their privileged position through the accumulation of social and linguistic capital.

In the spoken book “We make the road by walking: conversations on education and social change” by Horton and Freire (1990), Freire tells us that he does not believe in education for the humanity in general. He says educators need to be specific and clear about whom they are working for. It is essential to have political clarity. When educators are aware of students’ needs and respect their knowledge, their reading of the world, this is a political attitude. Educators must go beyond the common sense of people, with the people, and not alone. That is why it is crucial that educators have a very clear understanding of how the structures of the society work.

Horton also voices that he does not believe in neutrality because for him it is a code for the existing system. Neutrality is to comply with the existing structures in order to keep them as they are as long as we remain neutral. He claims that neutrality is an immoral act. Taking sides is crucial for an educator but it is imperative to know why you take sides and you need to be able to justify it. Freire adds that neutrality is the best way to hide your side. He argues that we cannot separate content from its historical and social context. It is just impossible. However, it is critical to find a balance between the content and its political and social aspects (Horton and Freire, 1990).

Chapter 2

Definitions of democracy and democratic citizenship education

*“The more the people become themselves,
the better the democracy”*

(Horton and Freire, 1990, p. 145)

The neoliberal state goes against democracy because it threatens community. It encourages society to develop individuality. Education is seen with the purpose of investing in human capital as if the investment would create someone who is valuable and can generate wealth through getting more educated, something like the more you learn the more you can produce wealth. On the contrary, democratic perspectives promote a discourse that encourages people to invest in human relationships and in understanding social relations.

Dewey (1958) understood democracy from two perspectives, political and social. The political perspective refers to the governmental policies and processes while the social perspective includes values of human relationships and the development of human personality. He says that democracy is “ the necessity for the participation of every mature human being in formation of the values that regulate the living of men together which is necessary from the standpoint of both the general social welfare and the full development of human beings and individuals” (p. 58).

Another important aspect of democracy is the public vision versus the private vision. Dewey’s social aspect of democracy is situated in the public domain of democracy because it recognizes the individual in relation to others and not in his private domain. A private view of democracy denies people’s interdependence and encourages an individualistic paradigm to shape the society. Public and private views of democracy do not live together because they are oppositional. The public view encourages collectivity while the other individuality. The

public aspect of democracy is concerned with social relations, issues of exclusion and inclusion. The neoliberal ideology is aligned with the private view of democracy.

In the foreword of the book “Pedagogy of the Heart” by Freire (1997), Martin Canoy from Stanford University gives us a great insight about Freire and his notion of democracy. Canoy mentions Freire’s commitment to the excluded, the powerless, the hungry, the illiterate. He assures that although Freire’s ideas started in Brazil, they are in the world and for the world. One interesting thing that Canoy clarifies is the fact that neoliberals and progressives agree that the state must be flexible and efficient. However, there is a great difference in the meaning of democracy for each of them. For neoliberals, democracy means business maximum freedom to accumulate capital while for Freire, democracy is to protect its citizens against the risks and excesses of a free market, including the marginalized through solidarity.

Definitions and forms of democracy

Democracy is normally defined as a system of government in which citizens participate through free and fair elections. Citizens participate in politics and civic life. Human rights are protected and for all citizens. The rule of law is respected and applied to everyone. U.S. president Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as “Government of the people, by the people, for the people”. Defining *democracy* is a very complex task because there is a lot of debate about it. Carr (2013) says that democracy may be “a style of government; a mode of decision-making; an ideology; a set of values; an understanding of rights, responsibilities and relationships; and many other things” (p. 3). It can be referred to a political system in which decisions are either made directly by citizens through referenda, or elected representatives. Democracy is not a linear sequence of events. It is a never-ending process. It is complex because it involves diverse interests, concerns and practices. It is particularly related to power, and the issues of social inequalities and social justice need to be

taken into consideration in any discussion about democracy; democracy calls for the participation and engagement of citizens of all walks of life; and finally, real democracy should not be limited to elections and voting (Carr, 2013).

Representative Democracy is founded on the principle of elected individuals representing the citizens. People transfer their decision-making power to representatives who legislate on a larger group's behalf. The citizen's participation is only during the elections through voting.

Participatory Democracy is a concept of democracy that proposes a high and inclusive participation of the largest possible number of citizens. It is the most demanding form of democracy because it requires an educated citizenry who are capable and willing to participate. It defends a higher participation of its citizens in decision-making that affects their own interests. It is founded on the direct action of citizens who exercise some power and decide issues affecting their lives without the interference of their elected representatives. A strong system of participatory democracy is one that gives to the citizens the control of the whole process and respects their decisions in full. The discussion is about who participates in the decision-making process. One point of tension in the participatory democracy is if individuals participate defending their own interests; who participates when that is everyone's interests? Participatory democracy advocates defend that in this case, more and more citizens should participate to defend everyone's interests.

Deliberative Democracy is based on the principle that the citizens debate among themselves to get to a consensus. It came out of the need to justify decisions, although the monopoly of the decisions are still in the hands of elected representatives and experts. Deliberation is a step of a dialogic and discursive process for reaching decisions, which legitimate democratic institutions. Deliberative democracy is more worried about how

decisions are made rather than who makes them. It is concerned about a better collaboration among opposite sides to try to find a better solution. So one side tries to persuade the other about their own perspectives. It is not a simple voting system where the majority wins. In the deliberative democracy, the opposing parts must reach a consensus by the formation and transformation of opinions and preferences through different argumentation. Deliberative democracy is often part of participatory democracy.

Liberal Democracy is based on the fact that citizens have rights that must be respected. However, participation normally happens in institutions such as social movements, political parties and not necessarily through direct action. Elected representatives and experts are the ones who would normally make decisions (Garon, 2009).

Frustration with Representative Democracy

Representative democracy can be defined as a form of government where elected officials represent a group of people, as opposed to direct democracy. In many countries, the adoption of representative democracy frustrated their citizens who expected improvements in wealth distribution and social security. The transparency of political power is another source of frustration. Politicians seem to have difficulties to hear the population and use the resources in a proper and timely manner. Very frequently, the elected representatives are more committed to elite's projects and they are often paying back the ones who financed their campaigns. In many contemporary democracies, the only form of participation in democracy is by voting.

Elections have become extremely expensive and dominated by powerful groups who privilege elitist demands and generate mass disengagement and little or no concern of the poor at all. Other than the traditional examples of democracy, such as universal suffrage, regular and free elections, freedom of association and political organization that are

democratic victories themselves, I choose to define democracy as the struggle of the excluded for equality and social justice against authoritarian exclusive practices of the powerful and the intolerant. Norberto Bobbio, the famous Italian political scientist, once said, “For a democratic system, the process of ‘becoming’, of transformation, is its natural state. Democracy is dynamic, despotism is static and always essentially the same” (as cited by Nylen, 2003, p. 3). It is dynamic because of its relationship with dissent. It is a conflictual process of adaptations and changes on the balance of social and political power (Nylen, 2003).

Elitist Democracy

Elitist Democracy is a relevant and interesting concept developed by Nylen (2003) that refers to transformation of previously inclusionary mechanisms of democracy (such as free elections and freedom of association and political organization) into mechanisms of exclusion. The powerful are becoming more and more powerful as they concentrate wealth and power among themselves. It is almost impossible to break this vicious circle of power by elections only. It is important to create mechanisms that can promote change and empower marginalized sectors of the society by participatory democracy. If we give voice and decision-making power to the people who have been left out, we might be able to restore the first purposes of the inclusionary mechanisms of democracy.

Thick and Thin concept of democracy

Many times, we associate democracy with elections. We elect our representatives and normally forget for whom we voted. Although voting is an important aspect of democracy, it only represents a limited view of what it actually is. The distinction between thin and thick democracy gives us a better understanding of the concept of democracy. Carr (2008) teaches that “the notion of *thin* as opposed to *thick* democracy allows us to conceptualize the visible tension between the superficial features often associated with democracy and the fundamental

scaffolding which, on the other hand, permits people to appropriate the deeper meaning of the term” (p. 148).

When I think about *thick* democracy, I think about its participatory aspects. Citizens who practice *thick* democracy are people who are critically and actively engaged in their community and committed to social change. They are aware of the power relations that permeate politics and are committed to emancipation. Voting is an important component of democracy but not the only one. It is also necessary to problematize elections as we see how expensive and exclusive they have become. The increasing influence of the media on the results of the elections is another aspect that needs to be considered. Corporations have hijacked elections by choosing who they want to be elected by financing their candidates. These candidates who are better financed have better ways to persuade voters to select them. Are elections really democratic?

The *thin* interpretation is related to the traditional view of democracy. The role of the citizen in this perspective is limited to the electoral process by voting and choosing representatives who are more closely related to their own views. Citizens can supervise their representative but can not intervene directly on the decisions. Democracy is limited to political parties, elections, and voting.

In summary, Carr (2011) proposes a very interesting definition of democracy in a thin versus thick perspective. Thin democracy involves a very limited view of democracy that emphasizes superficial aspects such as voting, elections and political parties while a thick democracy is characterized by an inclusive, holistic and critical engagement. He reinforces the importance of thick democracy for education. Carr (2011, p. 19-20) gives some examples of what he calls thick democracy for education:

- Studying about democracy necessarily involves preparing (and engaging) for democracy, including dialectical critique, and a focus on power;
- Democratic education is infused across the curriculum and involves all aspects of how education is organized;
- Politics pertains to all aspects of education, including decision making, oppression, marginalization and power;
- No teaching about and for democracy in a critical fashion is to privilege dominant hegemony and to avoid contentious matter and concepts that can lead to great harm.

Normally, when we talk about democracy we focus on the thin aspects. These aspects are part of democracy but they are not all. Advocating for more participation in a thick democracy is essential for strengthening citizenship. Carr (2008) states that “democracy cannot be disconnected from social justice if the object is a thick interpretation, learning for participatory experience and critical engagement on the part of students and teachers” (p. 156).

Definitions of citizenship and its four domains

I was curious to know how citizenship is defined by dictionaries in general and realized that they define citizenship in a very narrow perspective. The Cambridge English dictionary online defines citizenship as “the state of being a member of a particular country and having rights because of it” or “ the state of living in a particular area or town and behaving in a way that other people who live there expect of you” . Hebert and Sears (2001) define citizenship as “the relationship between the individual and the state, and among individuals within a state” (p. 1). They talk about four major domains of citizenship: civil, political, socio-economic, cultural or collective. It is important to keep in mind that these domains are dynamic and interconnected in complex contexts.

The civil domain of citizenship is about the relation between citizens who have common democratic goals and values within a space (physical or not) such as freedom of speech, expression and equality before the law, for example.

The political domain of citizenship refers to the right to vote and to participate in politics. It is related to free elections, political rights and duties.

The socio-economic domain of citizenship highlights the societal context and the rights to participate in political spaces, and hold rights such as economic well-being, social security, safe environment, right to work and minimal subsistence level, for example.

The cultural or collective domain of citizenship specifies how societies address cultural diversity, global migration, collective rights of minorities, etc. It is based on human rights and recognizes an anthropological dimension of a person (Hebert & Sears, 2001, p. 2).

Schugurensky (2005) brings more light into the discussion of citizenship by saying that “citizenship is a dynamic, contextual, contested and multidimensional notion” (p. 1). It is dynamic because it has been changing historically, contextual means its meanings change in time and in the space, there are disagreements on what citizenship is that is why it is contested, and finally it is multidimensional because it has four different dimensions: status, identity, civic virtues and agency.

According to Schugurensky (2005, p. 1-5) citizenship as status is one of the most common definition because it describes citizenship as membership to a nation-state. Members who are called citizens can vote and have a passport. Non-members are non-citizens who have very limited rights or no rights. Membership is acquired by birthplace (*ius solis*), descent (*ius sanguinis*), or naturalization (a process that varies according to the nation-state). However, there are exceptions and some nation-states do not give membership to some people who are born in their land. In the past, they were slaves, women, or foreigners. Sadly, nowadays, the vast majority of countries still refuse to give automatic citizenship to children

of undocumented immigrants or refugees who are born in their territories. This has created an increasing number of children who do not have any kind of citizenship based on the civic dimension. Data from the United Nation Refugee Agency say that a stateless child is born somewhere in the world every 10 minutes. Many of these children do not have access to medical care because they do not own nationality documentation. They cannot even get vaccinated (UNHCR, 2015, p. 1).

Citizenship as identity is related to issues of belonging and meaning. Important factors like a common history, language, religion, values, traditions and culture assign meaning and identity to a person. This perception of being a citizen is like being a member of a community, and of belonging to a certain culture. It is not necessarily attached to a nation-state or territories because borders of nation-states are constantly changing throughout history. It can assume different forms, as there may be different citizenships within a nation-state. Someone may be born in a nation-state and may not feel part of it as in the example of refugees who are forced to leave their own countries. This aspect of citizenship as identity is troublesome especially when we see colonized populations such as indigenous people who can have citizenship of the nation-state where they live but do not consider themselves part of it. Through violence, these groups have been dominated, assimilated, and in some cases eliminated. This view of citizenship may enforce the assimilation of minorities to the dominant group.

Citizenship as civic virtues is another aspect of citizenship that refers to the characteristics that are expected of a “good citizen”. For some people, citizenship as civic virtues is to be patriotic, obedient, diligent and religious. For others, it is to have compassion, respect, tolerance, solidarity, and individual responsibility. Some would say it is political engagement, community participation, good knowledge of social reality, critical thinking, and interest for the common good. A report published in 2012 by the Institute for Canadian

Citizenship says that Canadians consider a good citizen someone who (1) obeys laws, (2) participates actively in the community, and (3) helps other people/neighbors (p. 5). The issue is to arrive at a comprehensive decision as to what a good citizen is because it varies according to different historical, ideological and political contexts.

Citizenship as agency may be seen as an alternative for the issues we encounter with citizenship as status, identity, or civic virtues. This approach does not deny the other aspects of citizenship but it complements it. Citizenship as agency refers to citizens as social actors who exercise their rights and participate fully in the society individually and collectively. It seems to be more interesting for the society because it is about promoting change and addressing injustices. People are seen as active political subjects rather than bystanders and consumers. It is important to understand that people exercise their citizenship as agency in a context permeated with barriers and power relations that specify what a citizen can or cannot do. Schugurensky (2005, p. 5) says that we need to understand 'passive' and 'active' citizenship as a continuum rather than two different categories.

What kind of citizens?

Education (private or public) is essential for a democratic society. It can not be reduced to just training for a career, employment preparation, or just about personal achievement. Education has the power and the role of promoting the kinds of citizens that are important in a democratic society. However, what kind of citizen is crucial for an effective democratic society? Drawing on a two-year study of citizenship and democratic education programs in schools, Westheimer and Kahne (2004, p. 3) came up with a framework for citizenship education. In this framework, they found three visions of citizenship that helped in the conception of three different kinds of citizens: the personally responsible citizen, the participatory citizen, and the justice-oriented citizen. Westheimer and Kahne highlight that these three different visions of citizens are not cumulative because they reflect a distinct set

of theoretical and curricular goals. However, citizenship education programs may choose a curriculum that attempts to address the three visions of citizens.

The personally responsible citizen is someone who acts responsibly. A good personally responsible citizen picks up litter, gives blood, recycles, obeys laws, donates food or clothing, and volunteers in the community. This kind of citizen is expected to be honest and to have integrity, self-discipline, and to work hard. This is the most common kind of citizen that is described by people as desirable and normally receives more attention than other kinds. Educational programs who adopt this vision focus on building character by promoting personal characteristics such as honesty, integrity, hard work, and self-discipline. Educators usually promote volunteer work as a way of developing compassion and good feelings. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) state that this kind of citizen is inadequate to “the challenges of educating a democratic citizenry” (p. 5) because there is too much emphasis on individual characteristics and behavior and not enough on collective and public initiatives. There is no focus to combat the real causes of the social issues and therefore, there is no action to promote social justice. Actually, the contradiction is that just charity and volunteering will only perpetuate the problem instead of solving it. Another important aspect is that too much focus on obedience and patriotism can go against critical democratic goals because students are taught to obey and not to question. There is a clear link with the neoliberal ideology as citizens are encouraged to think in terms of their own responsibilities in relation to the society and never to question the actions of government or corporations. It is definitely aligned to a thin vision of democracy where the citizen’s participation is limited to voting and elections.

The participatory citizen is active in his/her community at local, provincial, and national levels. This citizen is engaged collectively in the community by organizing events and participating in actions that puts efforts to care for those in need. A good participatory citizen is someone who develops relationships, common understandings, trust, and collective

commitments. Educators who hold this vision normally engage in activities that teach students how government and community organizations function and how to participate. To illustrate the different kinds of citizens, Westheimer and Kahne (2004) say that “while the personally responsible citizen would contribute cans of food for the homeless, the participatory citizen might organize the food drive” (p. 4). The participatory citizen model can be problematic because it does not address causes of injustices. In this vision, citizens are encouraged to participate in their own communities but they do not address ideological and political issues related to the causes of poverty and injustices. This vision of citizenship education promotes a neutral analysis of the society. Again, it is aligned to the neoliberal ideology and to a thin view of democracy because issues are simplified and neglected. Focus on this vision of citizens may promote an apolitical citizen who do not recognize how power permeates our lives and is not ready to address injustices and challenge the status quo.

The least common citizenship model in educational programs is the justice-oriented kind. He/she is someone who focuses on understanding how social, economic, and political forces interrelate with each other. This kind of citizen is interested in issues of injustice and social change. A justice-oriented citizen will analyze society critically in order to improve it. Programs that adopt this vision engage students to question the social, political, and economic structures of society. This vision of citizenship focuses on addressing the root causes of injustices. Charity and volunteerism are not seen as the root causes of issues and do not promote social change. Freire (1970) explains why by saying “in order to have the continued opportunity to express their ‘generosity’, the oppressors must perpetuate injustice as well. An unjust social order is the permanent fountain of this ‘generosity’ (p. 44). The justice-oriented citizen goes beyond the ‘feel good’ activism and engage with real practice of democracy. It does not mean that characteristics such as respect, integrity, or engagement in the community are not valued. Actually, they are, but they are not enough. It is crucial to

address and change structural issues related to race, class, gender, etc. as Freire (1998) teaches us “Preconceptions of race, class, or sex offend the essence of human dignity and constitute a radical negation of democracy” (p. 41). Again Westheimer and Kahne (2004) clarify the difference between the three visions by saying “if participatory citizens are organizing the food drive and personally responsible citizens are donating food, justice oriented citizens are asking why people are hungry and acting on what they discover” (p. 4). The justice-oriented vision of citizenship education is aligned to a thick view of democracy and is ready to question, resist and repel neoliberal policies when they perpetuate injustices.

Westheimer and Kahne (2004) note that “personal responsibility, participatory citizenship and justice oriented – embody significantly different beliefs regarding the capacities and commitments citizens need in order for democracy to flourish” (p. 21). Each vision advocates for different ideologies and priorities and do carry different pedagogies, curricula, evaluations, and educational policies.

Citizenship education

Education goes beyond the development of an individual for a job. It is about thinking what kind of society we want to live in. Citizenship education is crucial for an education that give people the tools and abilities to work collectively with one another to improve society.

There are conservative and progressive orientations for citizenship education (Schugurensky, 2006, p. 70). Citizenship education can be used as a tool for maintaining the status quo or it can empower individuals and communities to promote emancipatory change. The conservative approaches follow what Freire (1970) calls ‘banking education’, he says, “in the banking concept of education, knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon those whom they consider to know nothing” (p. 72). The concept of banking education is perfectly aligned with neoliberal practices because it is the

kind of education that ‘domesticates’ people by transferring information to be memorized where students are objectified and dehumanized from community.

Schugurensky (2006) says that progressive orientations for teaching citizenship as agency “promote the development of an active, engaged, and committed citizenry” and that “instead of conceiving of learners only as economic producers and consumers, these programs also conceive of them as active citizens” (p. 72). I turn to Freire one more time as he proposes an alternative to the banking concept of education and that is what he calls problem-posing education. Problem-posing education engages in dialogue to promote critical thinking and creativity that stimulate true reflection and action upon reality (praxis). Citizens are political and historical subjects.

Finally, Schugurensky (2006) alerts that a citizenship education just centered in the teaching of character education and values can be very dangerous for democracy. He says that this kind of citizenship education tends to use a pedagogy of indoctrination that fosters blind patriotism, uncritical obedience to authority, and faith in the establishment. In this kind of citizenship education, any value is correct as long as it is a personal value.

Myths about democratic education

Educators have different assumptions on what citizenship education might be and how to teach it. Westheimer (2005) investigated different approaches to teaching citizenship and detected two myths about education for democracy.

The first myth is “the only way to teach democracy is to fully model it in the classroom and the school”. He says that “many (self-proclaimed) progressive educators insist that only by modeling democracy in the classroom and school can we teach valuable lessons about what it means to be a good democratic citizen” (p. 33). This is not necessarily true because context is as important as content. Teaching is important but the environment and the way educators conduct their classes speak much higher in the teaching of democracy. Educators

who strive for democratic understanding need to pay attention to the environment where they are teaching. It is essential that real citizenship educators address underlying beliefs and ideological assumptions conveyed by the content and values of the lesson, the pedagogy being used and the environment (Westheimer, 2005, p. 35).

The second myth is “knowledge always precedes action”. Westheimer (2005) states that “the implications for democracy can be seen in the tensions that arise when teachers seek to teach about democratic participation within school and classroom settings that are myopically focused on the narrowest possible conceptions of ‘knowledge’” (p. 36). Authentic participation in meaningful projects, engagement with the school community are example of actions that lead to citizenship. Knowledge does not necessarily lead to participation.

Discussing democratic educational practice in Brazil, Freire (1997, p. 91) teaches us that it is important to discuss the presence or absence of a democratic practice and that we need to engage schools, universities, unions, the whole society in discussions about the history of democracy, democracy and ethics, democracy and popular classes, and democracy and economics. He sheds light on democratic teaching by saying “I do not mean to sound as if I suddenly believed that democracy could be taught through speeches. Democracy is taught and learned through the practice of democracy” (p. 91). Freire (1998, p. 103) says that if we advocate for a democratic society, we need to concentrate our efforts to democratize the schools, the curriculum, and therefore the democratization of the teaching of the content.

Adult Citizenship Education

Throughout history, adult citizenship education in Canada has focused on a kind of citizenship that promoted assimilation. As we can see in the infamous example of the Residential schools, indigenous people were forced to live according to dominant standards. Immigrants also had to comply with dominant culture and ‘learn’ how to be a Canadian properly through assimilation. Citizenship education was fundamentally based on language

training for the labor market and citizenship education was very focused on citizenship as status. Nowadays, it has not changed much. Recently, I had to take a citizenship test and I had to memorize facts about Canada from a book called *Symbols of Canada* (2010). It is a very superficial book that tells the dominant version of the history without mentioning conflicts or controversies. It is clearly not focused on critical citizenship because there are no different viewpoints.

In contrast, Schugurensky (2006) teaches us that “the social-action tradition of Canadian adult education citizenship building has been about the development of collective agency for community empowerment and social transformation” (p. 74). He exemplifies with the Antigonish Movement coordinated by Moses Coady. It was a movement that achieved great economic, social, and cultural changes through cooperatives among poor workers.

Chapter 3

An example of a tool to promote citizenship education and strengthen democracy through participation: the Participatory Budget

“Those who, in learning to read and write, come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically at the social situation in which they find themselves, often take the initiative in acting to transform the society that has denied them this opportunity of participation. Education is once again a subversive force” (Freire, 1970, p. 29)

There is a general disbelief in democracy and elections. People do not want to go to vote and they do not believe in politicians or political parties anymore. People are also trying to survive by working and taking care of their families and communities, which make it harder for them to engage in politics. There is a certain disconnection with the democratic mechanisms. This is serious because the less attentive the people are to politics, the more powerful elites get and concentrate this power for their own interests. It is as if we are living lethargically and hopeless that anything could change. Frequently, we hear friends and family members saying that they “hate” politics or “just don’t care”. The problem is that the more indifferent we are, the more the politicians and the wealthy corporations will dominate politics and make it their own, and continue to exclude people. Once again, we need to address this passiveness and unresponsiveness with participatory democracy.

Building on Russell Dalton and Pippa Norris, Nylen (2003) believes in a growing number of citizens who are dissatisfied with the reality of the contemporary democracy. However, he says that those dissatisfied citizens are increasing their participation by getting involved in their communities through voluntarism and charity. Although Nylen says that this is a good indication that people want to change, it is not enough to bring changes and improvement to political participation in democracy. He claims that we need “some sort of

bridge to connect these two increasingly distinct realms of political activism”. This bridge needs to be an inclusionary mechanism that bring the excluded and ignored back to the game. It seems to be redundant but as Nylén says “representative democracy needs to be democratized” (p. 9).

Participatory Democracy in theory

Citizen participation comes to life when citizens engage in discussions of policy formation and implementation. Proponents of Participatory Democracy believe it is an important tool to strengthen democracy and to empower citizens against antidemocratic threats, such as anti-state neoliberalism, citizen-demobilization, or demagogic neo-populism. It is capable of increasing citizenship participation and augmenting the interest in politics against the status quo. Participatory Democracy has the potential to promote strategies to act in the interests of the repressed and excluded. As Nylén (2003) explains political participation can be seen “as the vehicle for an individual’s psychological emancipation from the idea of natural sociopolitical hierarchies (e.g. class, gender, race, etc.) and the sense of personal impotence in breaking out of such hierarchies” (p. 28). Nylén (2003, p. 29) believe that active participation in organized civil society, such as social movements or political parties for instance, reinforces democracy. Citizens feel they are part of something and they believe that they can contribute to the improvement of their communities.

In the participatory democracy, citizens’ participation is not limited to voting and elections every four or five years. Citizens participate in decisions about important aspects of public administration and they become protagonists of the public sphere. Moynihan (2007) claims that there are four arguments that reinforce the importance of public participation: postmodern discourse theory, disillusionment with bureaucracy, the search for a democratic ideal, and the need for participation in developing countries.

(1) The postmodern discourse theory says that there is a change of citizenship values and distrust in formal institutions such as government and political parties. This happens because of the expansion of mobility, the dismantling of traditional family structure, and consequently the breakdown of authority.

(2) The second argument is disillusionment with hierarchical bureaucracies. Instead of delegating their political will, citizens practice a thick democracy by making meaningful participation.

(3) The third argument is the search for the democratic ideal. Participation builds up on the value of individual citizens. It develops their sense of ownership as citizens see their capacity to promote change and improvements. Participation contributes to the self-esteem of individuals and the society as a whole.

(4) Finally, the last argument is the needs of developing countries. Moynihan (2007) says that poorer countries desperate need participation because it shows transparency and challenges the status quo. He claims that participation fosters good governance, promotes transparency, increases social justice and helps individuals become better citizens. Although I agree with the argument, I also believe that developed countries desperate need participation as well. Those are definitely important arguments for developed countries too. Distrust in representative democracy and very low voting turnouts are enough evidence that active participatory democracy would bring the sense of citizenship and community back to both developing and developed countries.

Levels of participation/collaboration

Petite (2014) introduces Archon Fung's democracy cube.

Illustration 1 Archon Fung's Democracy Cube

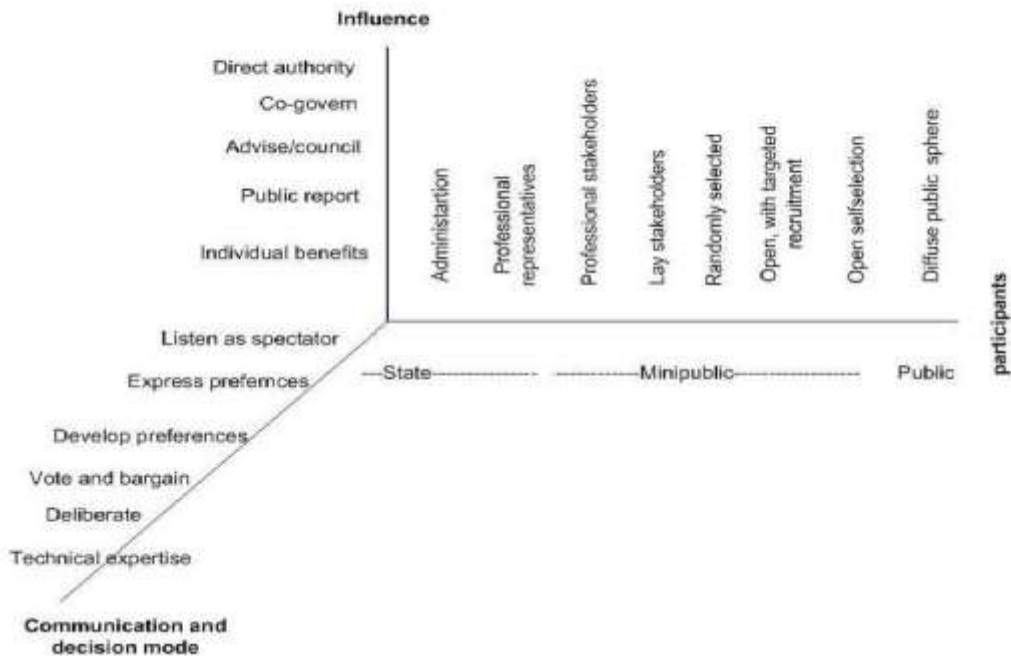


Figure 1: Archon Fung's Democracy Cube (Source: Petite, 2014).

Fung provides a framework that helps us measure the levels of participation or collaboration that citizens have in democracy. He developed a democracy cube that measures levels of engagement according to the following elements: who participates; modes of communication; and extent of authority and influence.

Petite (2014) says that the least generous form of public engagement is information sharing. Government only provide public transparency to its citizens. They do not participate in any decision. The only participation that citizens have in this case is to supervise their representatives. The only form of control that citizens can exercise in this situation is by not voting on them again if they do not correspond to their expectations after their mandate (about 4 or 5 years). Citizens are only spectators. Information sharing is the primary form of participatory democracy.

Consultation is the next level of public engagement. Citizens are consulted about certain issues and have the opportunity to speak and be heard. This kind of participation does not oblige representatives to follow the citizens' opinions and expectations. There is no guarantee that politicians will transform citizen's participation into real policies.

Collaboration is the next step in the continuum because citizens participate in the discussions looking for creative solutions for issues that are directly related to their communities. However, as Petite (2014) explains "the state maintains the power of final decision and this form of engagement is best described as an advisory-council model" (p. 18).

Finally, co-governing is the *thickest* mode of participation because citizens decide which issues are important for them to discuss, they bring the topics of the discussions, create projects for their community, they collectively find solutions for the issues, they vote for the best projects, and they participate and supervise the implementation of these projects. Co-governing transforms the projects into real policies that benefit the communities.

Critique on Participatory Democracy

There is some critique to participatory democracy that is important to be discussed here. Critics agree that most citizens can contribute to politics and should be able to contribute more. However, some critics say that participatory democracy does not take into consideration the complexity of our contemporary societies and that its ideal of more democracy is unrealistic and dangerous to be put into practice. Another critique on participatory democracy is that it takes for granted that people like politics and that they would be willing to participate while in fact it is the opposite, they say that people tend to abandon participation during the process. (Hauptmann, 2001).

I recognize that those are real issues. As our societies are becoming more and more complex, I believe that participatory democracy not only reinforces the sense of community but also brings a sense of belonging to its members. It has the potential to be a great democratic tool to bring people of different backgrounds together and sit and discuss common issues and find solutions together. In response to the second critique, I strongly believe that it is the role of education to encourage citizens to engage in democratic participation. The idea that people do not participate because they do not enjoy politics is not right. People who understand their role in the society and know how to participate will do so because it is something that will change their lives both collectively by finding solutions for common issues and individually by feeling part of the society and increase the sense of belonging (Schugurensky, 2006).

Participatory Democracy: an example

The only tool that a citizen has in a modern representative democracy is the vote. Yet, very few people exercise this right. With the ascendance of neoliberalism and constant attacks on democracy, citizens do not trust politicians who they see only interested in growing their own businesses and most of them are aligned with corporations' interests.

Participatory democracy is a model of governance based on citizens' deliberation and decision-making. It does not replace representative democracy but complements it by strengthening citizenship through participation. Schugurensky (2006) says that the more people participate in participatory democracy the more they learn and improve the democratic process.

I think participatory democracy is a great tool to promote adult citizenship education because it is democracy in action. All four dimensions of citizenship are taken into consideration. The focus is definitely in citizenship as agency and on the justice-oriented

citizen. I analysed a successful example of a participatory democracy tool that started in Brazil and is called Participatory Budgeting (PB).

Wampler (2007a) teaches us that “Participatory budgeting is a decision-making process through which citizens deliberate and negotiate over the distribution of public resources” (p. 21). It allows citizens to play a direct role in deciding how and where resources should be spent. It creates opportunities for engaging, educating, and empowering citizens. It offers the opportunity for historically excluded groups to make choices that will affect them directly. Participatory budgeting emerged in 1989 in the city of Porto Alegre in the state of Rio Grande do Sul in the south of Brazil governed by the Workers Party (PT). Driven by active social movements and Workers Party politicians, the municipality invited residents to not only give input on budget spending, but also to decide directly how funds were allocated.

The participatory budgeting process is rooted in three principles: (1) All citizens can participate regardless of legal status; (2) Participation is governed by direct and representative rules decided by the participants; (3) Investment resources are allocated based on (a) general criteria established by citizens engaged in the process, and (b) technical criteria established by the executive. Abers (2007) reinforces those principles by emphasizing that “participation is not a technical matter, it involves taking power away from those who have it and giving to those who do not” (p. 91).

PBs emerged in Brazil as a post-authoritarian reaction to dictatorship and neoliberal impositions. It quickly spread all over Brazil (about 250 cities) and implemented in more than forty countries. Talking about the main goal of the PB, Souza Santos (1998) says that it is “to encourage a dynamics and establish a sustained mechanism of joint management of public resources through shared decisions on the allocation of budgetary funds and of government accountability concerning the effective implementation of such decisions” (p. 469).

Maley (2010) explains that PBs “are a form of resistance to the extensive privatization of public services and deep cuts to basic infrastructures imposed by neoliberal governments” (p. 110). PBs have the potential to facilitate the appearance of new democratic processes. Normally, budgeting decisions are made based on corporate capital interests. Regular citizens have been excluded from budgeting decisions. PBs are great tools to bring the marginal voices back in the budgeting decisions. Schugurensky (2004) says that participatory democracy such as the PB “not only contributes to the constructions of a more transparent, efficient and democratic ways of governing, but also constitutes privileged spaces for civic learning and for the redistribution of political capital” (p. 607). For PBs to be successful, governments need to delegate real authority to citizens and implement the projects that are selected by them. According to Wampler (2007b), democratic PB programs have decision-making attributes, promote deliberation, and help to empower citizens, and their decisions/policy creations can transform whole neighborhoods. However, this is not always the case. In some cases, PB participants and administrators (normally elected ones) can “manipulate PB’s rules, producing outcomes significantly different from PB’s founding ideals (namely, social justice and deliberation)” (Wampler, 2007b, p. 9).

Participatory Budgeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil

Porto Alegre is a city of about 1,400,000 inhabitants. It is the main city in a metropolitan area with a population of about 3 million. It is considered a developed and rich city for Brazil’s standards. When the PB started, the city was immersed in social debts and there was no transparency in how the city budget was used. The relationship of the population and the elected representatives was based on corruption and patronage. It was under the government of the Work’s Party that a tax reform was made to make sure there were resources available and the PB started. In the beginning, the participation was low but it started to increase as the citizens started to feel confident and see the results in improvements

in the quality of life. It takes time to overcome the distrust of the political systems brought about by politicians in the representative democracy.

Cordeiro (2004) reports that even the revenue from locally raised taxes increased by fifty percent as people stopped tax evasion because they could see where the money was applied and they participated in that decision. A great respect for the decisions of the population was important to generate trust in the PB. Citizens were not merely consulted about their projects but they decided through voting and the government would make sure it was put into action. Before the PB, Porto Alegre had only fifty percent of its population connected to the sewage system. After the PB, it increased to eighty-three per cent. Normally, citizens' projects are focused on improvement for the quality of life in their neighborhoods, such as sewage, treated water, health care, etc. According to Cordeiro (2004) between 1989 and 2000, municipal-run schools increased from 22 to 90 and the failure rate among students fell from 30 per cent to 10 per cent. 114 community-run day care centers were created.

Souza Santos (1998) explains that there are three kinds of institutions participating in the setup of PB in Porto Alegre. The first ones are the administrative units of the municipal executive responsible for managing the budgetary debate with the citizens. The second ones are the community organizations, which are autonomous from the municipal government and mediate between citizen participation and priorities. The third ones is an institution that keeps the negotiation between the previous two organizations going. Citizens can participate in the PBs either through their own neighborhoods (16 regions) or according to subject areas (housing, social service, education, transport, leisure, etc.). Cordeiro (2004) explains that in smaller local meetings, the population decides on what subjects are priority according to the needs of the neighborhood. There are also thematic meetings in which citizens decide on wider subjects (general issues) that encompass a larger area or the whole city. Each regional PB has elected delegates and councilors to organize the meetings. There are permanent,

representative structures that take on the responsibility to run the PB process. They meet twice a week during the whole year. They also certify that the decisions made during the PB meetings will be implemented by the municipality. It is important to say that the government participates in the meeting and discussions presenting important technical information about different issues and procedures but they have no right to vote.

The PB annual cycle has five stages. See *Illustration 02* for whole process throughout the year.

(1) Preparatory meetings within each region and thematic area. Anyone can attend and the meetings normally take place in March or April. In this meeting, citizens debate what projects from the previous year have already been implemented by the government. It is in these informal meetings that they discuss what the priorities for the upcoming budget are; they elect delegates and councilors and begin gathering ideas for the projects.

(2) Regional and thematic assemblies. These meetings are the most important ones because citizens discuss and decide how the city will spend the money. They are normally in April or May. It is crucial to note that these meetings are publicized in advance in all possible ways. All citizens who live in the neighborhood can participate in the regional assemblies and anyone can participate in the thematic assemblies. Cordeiro (2004) says that attendance ranges from 400 to 1,500 people. Everyone is registered to prevent fraud during voting.

(3) Municipal Assembly. Held in July, this is the meeting where the PB councilors elected in the regional and thematic assemblies are presented and where the list of priorities are introduced to the local government.

(4) Final budget and investment plan. From July to December, the municipal government makes all technical and financial analysis of the demands received from the PB

meetings. A budget framework and a proposal are developed and voted by the elected councilors. If things have to be changed during this phase, it has to go back to the regional and thematic assemblies to be discussed and voted.

(5) Changing the rules. From November to January, delegates and councilors discuss the PB rules. They evaluate if anything needs to be changed. Finally, the cycle restarts with the preparatory meetings.

One important early criticism of the PB in Porto Alegre is that by focusing exclusively on the basic needs of the popular classes, it neglected important issues of interest of the middle class, businesses, and the trade unions. To respond to it, they added the thematic plenaries in order to increase the discussion and participation for different sectors of the society other than focusing only on territorial aspects. This shows that the PB learning process is dynamic. Souza Santos (1998) says that “the PB changed the political culture of community organizations, from a culture of protest and confrontation to a culture of conflict and negotiation (p. 482). See Figure 2 for more details.

It is of utmost important to understand that, representative and participatory democracy are closely related and that one does not exist without the other. Delegates and councilors are representatives elected by the communities to negotiate and mediate between citizens and the executive board. However, there is another body formed by elected representatives called Chamber of Deputies (legislators). This body is responsible to approve the annual budget and theoretically could refuse the PB projects. This way there is constant conflict between the legitimacy of PB and the Chamber of Deputies powers. Normally the members of the Chamber of Deputies want to perpetuate their power by ongoing re-election, so clientelist and patronage practices are very common. As we can see, there are enormous powers and interests that permeate the PB processes.

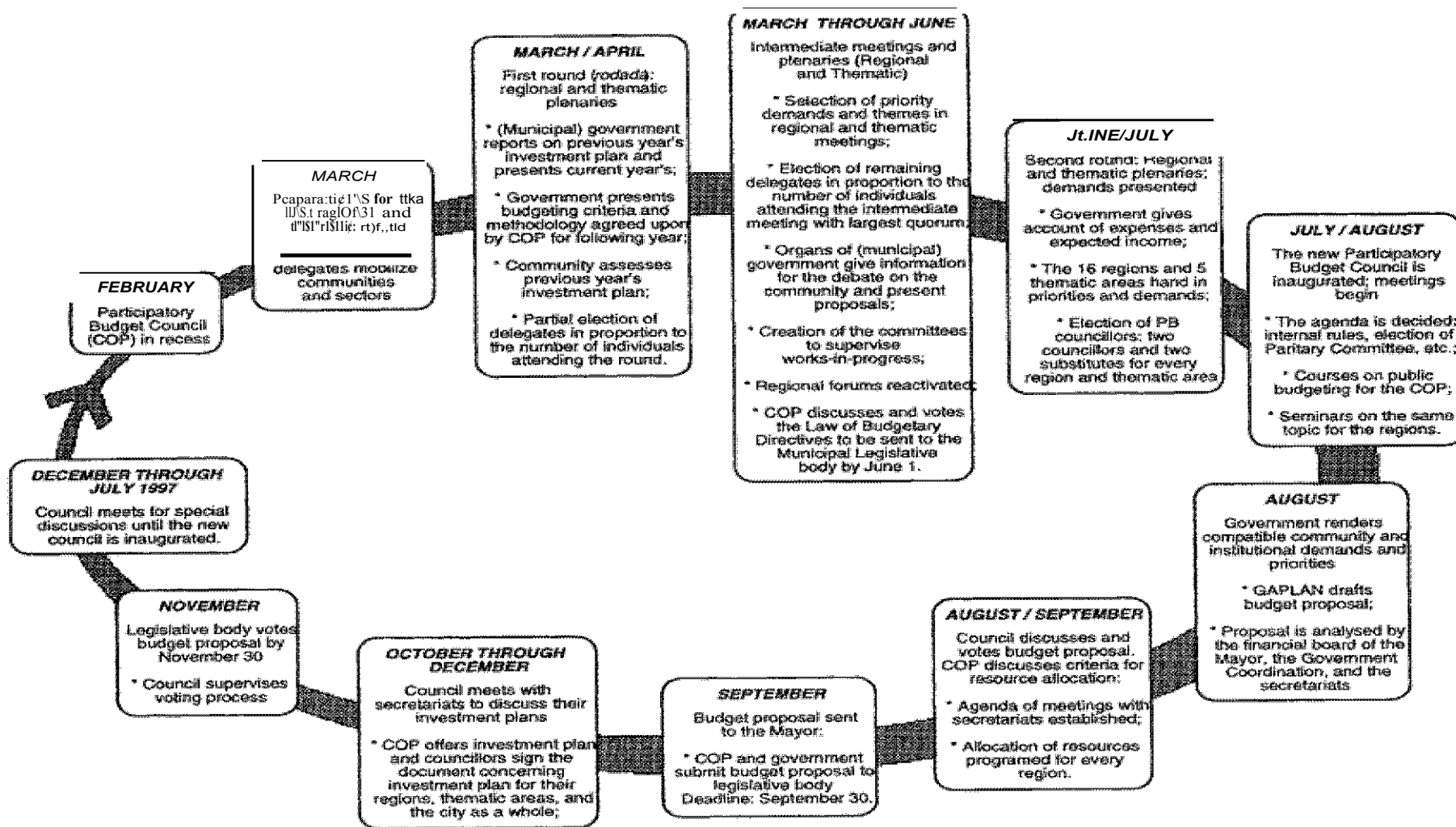


Figure 2. The cycle of the Participatory Budgeting (Source: Souza Santos, 1998).

A story from Porto Alegre

Wampler (2007b) provides an interesting example of PB in action. He attended a PB meeting held in Porto Alegre, Brazil. The meeting took place in an outdoor basketball court in a cold evening. Three hundred people were there. The purpose of the meeting was to decide, by majority vote, which project would be included in the final city budget. Two groups presented two different projects. The first one advocated for the construction of a small health care clinic in a poor area of the city. The other group wanted the construction of a pedestrian bridge over a very dangerous avenue in the neighborhood. Wampler (2007b) describes the speakers from both groups as working-class citizens. He says “the fact that low-income, poorly educated individuals dominated a state-sponsored public policy venue – one in which their decision, via majority vote, would directly affect government action – signified a radical change in basic state-society relations in Brazil” (p. 10). Each participant had three minutes to speak and according to the PB rules, up to ten participants were allowed to speak. After that, there is a moment of clarification and comments from government leaders. If more people need to speak, then there is an informal vote to determine whether to extend the debate or not.

In this specific evening, citizens who wanted to build the health care project claimed that such a facility would prevent people from getting easily preventable diseases (something that was increasing at that time) and that it would save time, as people from the community had to travel long distances to the nearest health care facility. The other group defended the pedestrian bridge by saying that it was necessary because of four pedestrians from the community that had died by trying to cross the avenue. The health care facility group said there was already a pedestrian bridge two hundred meters away from the point where they proposed to build their new one. They said that the fatal accidents happened because the

members of the community wanted to save time by crossing the avenue instead of going over the closest pedestrian bridge.

Wampler says that it was fascinating how the representatives from each group brought up discussions about social justice, and high level discussion about which public policy outcomes would be more beneficial for the community. He says that at the end of the night, a vote was taken and the majority chose the health care clinic as the region's policy project. In Wampler (2007b)'s own words, this PB example "demonstrates one of the strengths of the PB process: deliberation prior to voting serves as a means to influence one's fellow citizens, and it also serves as a means to inform government officials that leaders and residents of the community are concerned about a particular issue" (p. 11).

Participatory Budgeting and the World Bank

Souza Santos (1990) once said that initiatives such as the PB faced a dilemma: they would not work and would be discarded as an utopia or they would be "conceived of as working and bound to succeed and are adopted by the World Bank, where they are ground, pasteurized, and converted into new appendages of conditionality" (p. 507). The practice of participatory budgeting (PB) has spread all around the world over the past few years.

According to Goldfrank (2012), more than one thousand cities worldwide use some form of participatory budgeting. The World Bank is one of its most important promoters and the one that holds the greatest resources too. The question is why the World Bank, which is widely recognized as a neoliberal institution, has been promoting PB around the world. It is intriguing how a local Worker's Party initiative to promote participatory democracy has been embraced and surpassed by the World Bank.

After analyzing several World Bank publications promoting PB, Goldfrank (2012) saw two opposing perspectives. On one hand, the arguments, reasons, and language used in favor of citizen participation through PB are very similar to the ones used by social movements. On the other hand, the Bank's critics do not believe in its "good intentions" and claim that by adopting participatory approaches, the World Bank is trying to neutralize them and expand the neoliberal agenda. Goldfrank (2012) interprets the World Bank's promotion of participatory budgeting from two perspectives. He says that within the World Bank there are authentic PB advocates who believe in its potential to democratize power and "those who use the language of participation as a kind of Trojan horse for their own marketizing agenda" (p. 7).

Godfrank (2012) does not believe that by promoting a top-down PB the World Bank will reinforce its neoliberal agenda, as citizens will be aware of the need for privatization and public expenditure cuts. He says that in countries like Peru where the World Bank was successful in the implementation of PB it did not happen. He also believes that it could be seen as positive because there are people inside the World Bank who really believe in PB as originally initiated in Porto Alegre (Brazil) and that these people can influence policies within that institution. Finally, he says that research shows that in cities in which top-down PB is implemented there is an increase in the government transparency and a significant decrease in corruption. The World Bank does not have full control on how municipalities implement PB or how their citizens influence the process and that will vary enormously throughout the world. Therefore, the promotion of PB by the World Bank has the potential to be beneficial if the democratic principles that originated it are respected and applied.

Principles of the Participatory Budgeting

The PB has some universal principles that can be applied on a general scale. Ubiratan De Souza (2004) participated very closely to the experiences in PB in both municipal and state levels in Brazil. He enumerated some principles that were common in most initiatives.

The first principle is the Direct Democracy. The PB is a process of direct, voluntary and universal democracy. It means that citizens discuss and decide on public policies and budget. This principle is important because it goes beyond any limitation of time as the representative democracy has. Citizens are not spectators of democracy anymore, but they are active participants.

The second principle is social justice. It attacks the process of social exclusion that comes out of neoliberalism. The PB responds to the challenges of the contemporary state's crisis of legitimacy. De Souza (2004) says "the struggle against social exclusion demands public policies that change the distribution of income and power in our cities and across our countries, introducing forms of direct participation by the population in the administration of public affairs" (p. 58).

The third principle is universal participation. Citizens of all levels, regardless of their political party, social class, religious affiliation, or level of schooling have the right to participate. Nobody should have any privilege in the process in order to make sure that no specific party or dominant organization take control of the process. This principle enables citizens of all classes, spheres, ranks, arenas, or status, even without any tradition in political participation, to express themselves and have a voice.

The fourth principle is the principle of the whole budget. It means that the population needs to be trusted and able to decide on the whole budget and not only in simple and small aspects or quantities. Citizens need to be given courses on technical aspects so that they can

make informed decisions. Adult education initiatives are crucial at this point because they prepare citizens to participate.

The fifth principle says that the PB builds on existing political rights. The PB does not substitute representative democracy but it complements and improves it. That is why, most of the time, no new legislation is required to implement PB.

The sixth principle lies on the fact that citizens should create the PB's own rules autonomously without the influence of local government. The PB is a process and not a finished project. It needs constant discussion and development. It is built on assumptions of self-managing, autonomy and openness. De Souza (2004) clarifies that "for the PB to be a genuine and effective process of popular participation, not just a process of consultation, the decisions taken by the population and the government need to be documented and published so that they are available to everyone" (p. 61).

Finally, the PB is based on solidarity among citizens and genuine participation develops self-awareness among citizens. The awareness of their own rights as a citizen (quality education, healthcare, etc.) and the belief that their action can promote change and make those rights a reality give them a sense of belonging, solidarity, self-esteem and conscious citizenship. Minority and marginalized groups feel their voice is heard and that they can participate in the society because they are the ones who make decisions.

The tango of citizenship education and participatory democracy

According to Schugurensky (2004), participatory democracy processes can happen in schools, families, the workplace and a variety of organizations such as churches, advocacy groups, neighborhoods associations, political parties, housing cooperatives, or social and environmental movements. By participating in PB process through deliberation and decision-

making, ordinary citizens develop not only a variety of civic virtues (solidarity, tolerance, openness, responsibility, and respect), but also political capital. He defines political capital as the capacity for self-governance and for influencing political decisions (knowledge, skills, attitudes, distance to power, and resources). Pateman (as cited in Schuguresnky, 2007, p. 608) developed a framework whose focus is primarily on the human development, particularly political learning. In this framework, maximum participation input is required. However, the output is not always policies/decisions. Output includes development of the social and political capacities of each individual.

From this pattern, we understand that there is a continuous reinforcement between participation and learning. The more citizens participate the more they learn and develop their political capacities. The more citizens are prepared to participate by citizenship education, the more they will be willing to participate and the better their participation and outcomes will be. It is a virtuous circle. Citizenship education reinforces participation. At its turn, participation reinforces citizenship education. Schugurensky (2004, p.609) says that this process becomes self-sustaining. He cites Dewey (1938)'s observation that not all experiences have the same pedagogical potential. Not all experiences are educative. Some experiences can distort reality and be miseducative. Schugurensky claims that the PB is not any type of political experience; it is a real democratic process of deliberation and decision-making based on dialogue, fairness and respect for the decisions taken.

Schugurensky (2004) teaches us that political efficacy is the positive feeling that individual political action actually can affect positively the political process. It is when I feel it is important for me to participate because I can make a difference in the community. My voice is heard and can influence the political process. One aspect that I found very interesting in Schugurensky's framework is that citizens who participate see the broadening of their perspectives and the appreciation of the connection between private and public interests. He

says “one important aspect of the expansive effect is the transition from narrow self-interest to the common good, and from looking only at one’s street as the centre of the universe to a more comprehensive understanding of the community as a whole” (Schugurensky, 2004, p. 611).

Schugurensky (2004) says there is a lot of informal learning (self-directed, incidental and socialization) in the PB process. He teaches that the pedagogical dimension of PB deserves attention by citizenship educators and researchers. Following the perspective that knowledge is socially constructed and that learning often occurs in social interaction, situated learning takes place when learners work on authentic and realistic tasks that reflect the real world. Learners are involved in “communities of practice” that embody a set of values, behaviors and skills that need to be acquired by members. This learning process is normally incidental and rarely deliberate. The knowledge content and the capabilities developed are determined by the demands of the real world and the particular context in which learners are interacting.

Schugurensky (2004) brilliantly summarizes how thinkers have been discussing participatory democracy:

“J.S. Mill claimed that participatory democracy fosters among participants an ‘active character’. G.D.H. Cole made references to the development of ‘a non-servile character’. For Rousseau, participatory democracy nurtures a cooperative character, which includes an interest of the common good, and a capacity to define collectively the common good and to make democratic decisions to put it into practice. For Pateman, it promotes a democratic character, which consists of a capacity for self-governance and political efficacy” (p. 614).

Participatory Budgeting: A school of democracy and citizenship – the experience at Bioscience High School in Phoenix, AZ

There are many ways of teaching democracy. We can teach democracy as a system of government, and in this case, it is common for students to memorize historical, geographical and institutional facts. Some prefer to teach by practicing it in class and in the school hoping that students will learn it. However, most cases this way is ineffective because students learn about democracy in an authoritarian way. Teachers keep a position of authority and students have no voice in the process. Their practice is limited to electing a couple of peer representatives throughout the school years. These practices can be improved and made more effective if students actively participate in deliberation and decision-making processes.

It is important to note that the participatory budgeting is an educative process. Citizens who participate become more knowledgeable about how their city/school works. They also become more tolerant to different views and perspectives because the deliberative discussions demand a lot of patience and sharing of different ideas. Citizens who participate in the PB learn in the process. By learning, they have the tools to engage more actively in citizenship. During the PB process, it is essential to give tools to participants on formal procedures, skills and conflict resolution techniques. In order to have citizens who are capable of participating, school and adult education centers can prepare them to engage in civil, political, and problem-solving activities. Cohen, Schugurensky & Wiek (2015) highlight three main arguments for the adoption of PB practices in education. First, people have a fundamental right to be heard in decisions that affect them (either in their neighborhood communities or in their school community). Second, the people who are affected by an issue can find better solutions if they participate in the decision-making process. Third, participation is a fundamental element of human development as it promotes agency among participants.

At school level, PB reaffirms citizenship education in practice. The focus on standardized tests and job market put very little emphasis on practicing civic engagement such as participatory democracy. Typically, the knowledge that is valued is the one that can be useful for obtaining a good grade in standardized tests. Cohen et al. (2015) studied the case of Bioscience High School, a public school in Phoenix, Arizona, which implemented the first student-centered PB in North America during the 2013-2014 academic year. The goal of the PB process in school was to develop in students competencies that are important to engage in public debates and democratic decision-making initiatives.

In order to measure the effects of the PB process in the students, Cohen et al. (2015) adopted an instrument designed by Schugurensky (2002; 2006) that consisted of 55 indicators of learning and change organized in four categories: knowledge, attitudes, skills, and practices (KASP). They decided to use only 20 indicators that could be applied in schools. After the PB process students filled in questionnaires indicating their level of competency development before and after the PB process. In order to put the PB process in practice, the principal of the school reserved \$2,000 budget for students to decide how they would spend the money. The process counted on the participation of the student government board and two elected students from each grade. This committee (16 members) was responsible to coordinate the entire process. They introduced the PB to the students in a school-wide assembly. Students learned that they could present projects to use the \$2,000 budget and were very surprised that the principal would trust them to decide on the application of the money. In total, 45 students submitted 32 projects. The committee narrowed it down to final 18 projects and students voted for their favorite three projects. Promotion posters were placed in strategic locations, in social media, and a forum was held by the committee to explain each of the projects. After a voting session, the three most popular projects were the Bioscience Outdoor Pavilion, ink for the 3D printer, and the microscope camera adapters. It is important

to note that all freshman students had specific lessons on participatory democracy and how to engage on the PB process. Teachers at this grade dedicated time of their lessons to talk and discuss about this process. Because of all the efforts of the educators to raise awareness to the PB process in their freshman classes, we can say that freshman students received formal education before participating while other grades did not have them.

Cohen et al. (2015) found that “students reported the most significant changes in indicators pertaining to knowledge and practices, and smaller changes regarding attitudes. Changes in civic and democratic skills feel somewhere in between” (p. 24). The freshman students had more meaningful changes than other students did. Cohen et al. (2015) explain that the learning changes were higher among freshman students because they had formal, in-class learning opportunities that might have contributed to maximize the informal learning that happened during the PB process. Freshman students’ teachers were more involved in the process and reserved more class time to engage with their students by explaining the importance of the decision-making process and deliberation. Cohen et al. (2015) conclude that the role of teachers in teaching about the process and encouraging students to participate “was a crucial piece in the learning process of freshman students, and confirms the value of connecting formal and informal settings to nurture the development of certain competencies, and the importance of reflection in experiential learning” (p. 31). From this case study, they concluded that it is very important to build up-front capacity by discussing the background and justification of PB with students. It is also crucial to have enough time to conduct the process in order to build capacity and design a more meaningful process. Finally, Cohen et al. (2015) say that it is important to have formal classroom education to improve student competency acquisition.

Chapter 4

Summary and presentation of a critical theoretical framework to strengthen democracy through citizenship education and participation

“Whereas banking education anesthetizes and inhibits creative power, problem-posing education involves a constant unveiling of reality. The former attempts to maintain the submersion of consciousness; the latter strives for the emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality” (Freire, 1970, p. 81)

How adult education principles can foster participation in PB and vice versa: two paradigms

First: Malcolm Knowles’ andragogy principles

Many attempts have been made to define who the adult learner is. Nevertheless, it is not an easy task to do. Some would define adult learners by age while others would focus on the psychological and sociological aspects of the person. Talking about this issue, Cranton (1992) states that each person is “a complex product of the variety of experiences he or she has undergone, of the philosophy which guides behavior, of values held, of the autonomy which exists in the life, social group, of the culture of the individual, and numerous other influences” (p.56).

Knowles (1990) differentiates adult learners from young learners building up on some assumptions. He says that adults learn differently from children because they have different needs and expectations. He also says that adult learners have been the most neglected learner because most efforts have been put on pedagogy, which is the study of how children learn. Knowles advocates for andragogy, which is a set of assumptions on how adults learn.

1. According to andragogy principles, adults need to know what and why they are learning and what advantages they will have after learning it. They also need to know how they can learn in order to feel confident to search for available resources.

2. Adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own decisions. They are capable of self-direction and they need to participate on the decisions of what and how they will learn.

3. Adults bring to class a great deal of experiences from life. Consequently, with adults, the emphasis is on individualization of teaching and learning strategies and peer-helping activities. On the other hand, because of the accumulation of activities, adults 'tend to develop mental habits, biases, and presuppositions that tend to cause us to close our minds to new ideas, fresh perceptions, and alternative ways of thinking.' (Knowles, 1990, p. 59)

4. It is important for adults to learn things they will use in their real life situations. Timing learning experiences according to developmental steps of adult's social roles rather than biological reasons becomes necessary to make sense of things.

5. Knowles (1990) explains that different from children who are subject-centered, adults are problem-centered learners. They want to learn things that will help them in the challenges of their daily lives.

6. Adult learners are motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors.

Although Knowles' assumptions are paramount to understand the adult learner, they should not be considered exclusive of adults as some of these assumptions can also be applied to young learners and others do not apply to certain adults at all. Knowles (2005) has revised his first views of pedagogy opposed to andragogy and see them as being on a

continuum and that there are cases in which both approaches can be applied. Merriam (2001) highlights that

“Some adults are highly dependent on a teacher for structure, while some children are independent, self-directed learners. The same is true for motivation; adults may be externally motivated to learn, as in attending training sessions to keep their job, for example, while children may be motivated by curiosity or the internal pleasure of learning” (p. 3).

It is also important to highlight that many adult educator scholars say that Knowles did not include the social aspect in his andragogy theory but concentrated on an individualistic and psychological approach as he limited his theory to the analyzes of the characteristics of the adult learner. Spencer (2014) says that Knowles’ “focus on andragogy misses out on an understanding of adult education as a distinctive social activity”(p. 43).

Comparative table between Malcolm Knowles’ adult education principles and PB

Malcolm Knowles’ adult education principles	Participatory Budgeting principles
1. The need to know	Participants need to understand why they are participating in the PB process.
2. The learners’ self-concept	PB process is based on self-managing, autonomy and openness.
3. The role of the learners’ experiences	The more people participate in the process, the better it gets. The different experiences the people bring to the

	process makes the experience and debate much more meaningful and rich.
4. Readiness to learn	Participation is voluntary. People only participate when they feel they need. Educating people about the process and the need coming out of their own lives together can bring about the conditions for participation readiness.
5. Orientation to learning	Participants apply what they learn immediately as they learn to participate and as they participate, they learn.
6. Motivation	PB motivation is based on extrinsic and intrinsic motivators. Deciding on the construction of a new health center or a new library are great extrinsic motives to participate. However, building up your self-esteem to see your voice matters is a great intrinsic motive.

Second: Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy principles

Freire's theory came out of his literacy work with peasants in Brazil in the 60s. Freire promoted adult literacy not only by helping peasants to read and write (read the words) but also by encouraging peasants to gain critical consciousness of themselves and their lives (read the world). Freire also promoted political actions to resist forms of oppression among

peasants. It is important to highlight that critical consciousness is wider than the concept of critical thinking. Critical thinking is to have the competence to look at things in analytical, evaluative, synthetic, and logical ways.

According to Kumagain and Lypson (2009), critical consciousness both contrasts and complements critical thinking because “critical consciousness posits that the thinking subject does not exist in isolation, but rather, in relationship to others in the world. The development of critical consciousness involves a reflective awareness of the differences in power and privilege” (p. 783). This is what Freire means by “reading the world”. Freire names this process *conscientização*. It incorporates the idea of critical thinking and a social justice orientation. Its focus is on the humanization of human relationships. Critical consciousness alone does not promote social change. Political action is necessary to bring up social change. Freire calls it praxis, which is reflection and action.

The “banking concept of education” refers to traditional educational systems where the teachers are seen as the owners of the knowledge and students are empty vessels yearning for knowledge to be deposited on them. It is a system where students are not encouraged to reflect or act but to memorize, file, organize, and store information as much as possible. Presently, “banking education” is very popular and widely spread as our educational systems turn towards neoliberalism and technical teaching for the job market and consequently, forget the human and social aspects of education.

Opposing the banking system of education, Freire’s concept of “problem-solving” model encourages students and teachers to learn one from the other. Freire (1970) teaches us that “the teacher is no longer merely the-one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while being taught also teach” (p. 80). Teachers recognize the students’ previous knowledge and use it to promote reflection to construct

knowledge and act upon the world to promote social justice (praxis). This perspective incorporates the students' own values, worldview, and experiences. Students and teachers exchange knowledge that stimulate critical reflection on issues that affect them directly.

Critical pedagogy asks how and why knowledge is constructed the way it is, and how and why some constructions of reality are legitimated and celebrated by the dominant culture while others clearly are not (McLaren, 2009, p. 63).

Comparative table between Freire's liberation principles and PB

Freire's critical pedagogy principles	Participatory Budgeting principles
1. Bonding among learners	PB participants are members of the same community and by participating in finding solutions together to their common issues develops a sense of community and belonging that generates bonding among them.
2. Student's needs	It is crucial that PB participants investigate what their needs are in order to create and develop projects that will bring changes to their lives.
3. Engaged, interactive, and honest dialogue. Ground rules for difficult discussions.	By deliberating in PB processes, participants involve in dialogue with other participants and learning about different perspectives and enlarging their knowledge of the other and of themselves. PB processes have rules of

	<p>respect that have been created by the participants themselves. These rules secure a safe and productive environment even if the topics in discussion are difficult ones.</p>
<p>4. Reducing of power differences among participants. Recognizing power relations.</p>	<p>Even in PB processes, participants get involved in power relations. Some participants “participate” more than others do and might tend to monopolize the discussions and projects. To reduce these issues, it is important to make sure that participants are aware of the power differences during the process and create mechanisms to guarantee a fairer process where everyone shares the power instead of keeping it to themselves.</p>
<p>5. Social Action</p>	<p>PB is a great tool to promote social action in the participants’ community. By participating, community members increase their knowledge on how to act and change their realities. They go from passive observers (many times alienated ones) to active social agents.</p>
<p>6. Addressing issues of racism, sexism, sexual orientation, or class privilege.</p>	<p>In PB, every participant has the same voice. Every member of the community</p>

	<p>can participate independently of social class, gender, or race. Inclusion of participants of all walks of life is crucial for the functioning of the PB.</p>
<p>7. Critical consciousness (<i>conscientização</i>)</p>	<p>The more the people participate the more they understand their community and themselves. As knowledge of how politics work and how they can influence the decisions of politics and make decisions directly through PB initiatives, members of the community become more critical towards their issues.</p>
<p>8. Recognition of students' lived experiences</p>	<p>Each participant of PB brings to the process his or her own lived experiences and their own knowledge. Valuing their knowledge and their voices is an essential aspect of the PB process. It is a democratic process because it is diverse. The fact that it is diverse enriches the whole process and the decisions made are much better in quality.</p>

A theoretical framework that can be used to strengthen democracy through citizenship education and participation in schools and adult education centers

1. Critical citizenship Education

a. Adult Education principles should be used to teach about different forms of democracy, the implications of each of them, and how we can participate. Knowles (1990) offers us principles and guidelines that work as an individual and psychological approach while Freire (1970) offers us a critical social aspect that can be used to understand the collectivity and to question issues of power and to promote social justice.

b. Citizenship as agency sees the learners and educators as social actors of the community. It goes beyond the understanding of citizenship as status, identity, or civic virtues. It is a critical and inclusive view of citizenship that also fosters social justice and combat injustices (Schugurensky, 2005).

c. Justice-oriented model of citizen focuses on understanding how social, economic, and political forces interrelate in our society. It is not based on volunteerism or false generosity (Freire, 1970). Justice-oriented citizens try to understand the root causes of injustices such as neoliberalism and act on those issues so that they can be ceased (Westheimer and Kahne, 2004).

d. Problem-posing model (*conscientização*) challenges the banking model of education and promotes critical awareness. It resolves the teacher-student contradiction because the teacher is not the one who imparts knowledge on the students' minds but is someone who learns in dialog with the students. In the problem-posing model of education, the students are critical investigators along with the teacher. While the banking model of education is aligned with neoliberal practices and inhibits creativity, problem-posing education "strives for the

emergence of consciousness and critical intervention in reality (Freire, 1970, p. 81). It is essential to understand that knowledge is socially constructed and not transmitted to the students' minds.

e. Education for the human potential of the learner as a whole and not on the human capital which is a very contradictory concept. Education for the human potential reinforces the concepts of citizenship education, democracy, collectivity, public education, and it is crucial for a thick vision of democracy (Jean, 1982).

2. Participation in deliberation and decision-making processes (Cordeiro, 2004)

a. Participants take part in the democratic process voluntarily and directly. People should not be forced to participate. They participate because they want and they feel how important it is to bring changes into their lives. It has to be through direct participation because once their voices are heard and what they say promote positive changes, participants feel more motivated to keep participating and bringing changes to their lives and their communities.

b. It is based on solidarity among people. Therefore, social exclusion should be combated overtly through participation and action. As people participate, they will be taken out of the margins and be put in the center. Once their voices are heard and their actions are put into practice, participants feel part of the decisions and less excluded.

c. Participation should be universal. Participation should be guaranteed regardless of their social class, gender, sex orientation, political party, religion, and so forth. No privileges should be given to anybody on the same basis. For a truly democratic process, participation should be universal.

d. Trust must be also the center of the process. Participants must be trusted. Regardless of the decision, if the process of deliberation was followed and the majority of the participants made

a decision, it must be respected. There is nothing more discouraging than not being taken seriously and learn that your voice is worthless. If the decisions are not executed in full, the participatory process can have a very negative effect of distrust and disbelief towards democracy. In order for the experience to be positive and learning to take place, participants must be trusted with total control of the process from the beginning to the end. Self-managing, autonomy and openness should be the assumptions behind the whole process.

e. The process of participatory democracy is in constant transformation. It is organic because it is always becoming and evolving. The more people participate, the better the process becomes and new and improved forms of participation appear.

3. Aiming for a thick vision of democracy (Carr, 2008)

a. Focus on political literacy and commitment to an education that promotes social justice, social transformation, and educate people politically. It is essential to encourage dialog among citizens, and also learn and understand other people's ideas and other ways of doing things. Respect dissent and understand the importance of having and knowing different views of society and politics.

b. Awareness of power relations and committed to critical thinking about social and political issues. Addressing issues of power in all aspects of social life is part of a thick vision of democracy.

c. Direct participation in decisions is important. Citizens know what they need and want to participate in the decisions. A thick vision of democracy promotes people's participation in all aspects of society and goes far beyond voting and elections. Hope is essential in times of pessimism. It is important to believe in the capacity that citizens have to make a difference, act against oppression and liberate themselves.

d. Emancipatory engagement and political action that seek to encourage participation and inclusion of social movements in the decisions of the society/community.

e. Problematization of voting and elections. The thick vision of democracy is opposed to a privatized and market oriented consumerist democracy. The neoliberal threat to democracy needs to be exposed and opposed.

Explanation of Figure 3.

The tango metaphor (Schugurensky, 2004) represents well the relationship between critical citizenship education and participation in deliberation and decision-making processes. One reinforces the other. Education supports participation and participation reinforces education. The consequence of this dance is an inclusive form of democracy where citizens have political awareness and political literacy, where they know the mechanisms of participation to promote social justice. It is a non-stop dance that strengthen and perfects democracy continuously. By taking formal or non-formal lessons on critical citizenship, people learn how to participate in democracy and what they need to exercise their rights and change their realities. By participating in deliberation and decision-making processes, people also learn and reinforce what they had already learned in school, adult education centers, etc. about participation, democracy, citizenship, and how power permeates our society. It is like a dance, one promoting the other. This ongoing process leads towards a thick democracy. Democracy is never a product or a finalized outcome because democracy is always becoming. It is changed and perfected by this dance between critical citizenship education and participation in deliberation and decision-making processes.

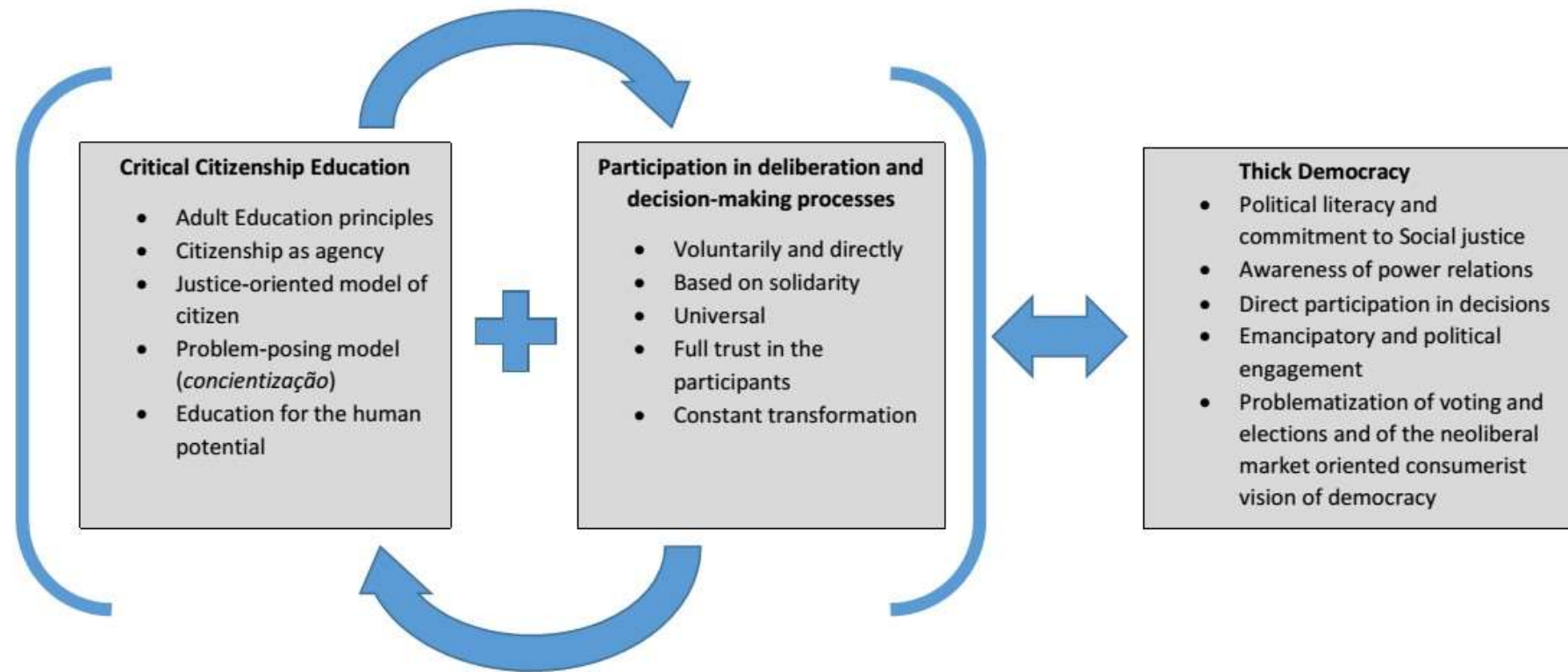


Figure 3. Summary of the theoretical framework.

Conclusion

Educating for democratic critical citizenship is extremely important in times of increasing neoliberal ideology. As the neoliberal paradigm has changed the structures of our communities by promoting individuality through consumerism and the commodification of education and of the access to education, it is crucial to understand democracy by teaching citizenship as agency and by engaging justice oriented citizens. Striving for an education that educates for the human potential rather than human capital is essential for the survival of the democracy. Without this understanding, the neoliberal agenda will continue to deepen its transformation of education into consumerism and individualism.

Democracy is more than a concern for individual freedom because it embodies a concern for the public good. We need to restore the political in education. There is no neutrality in citizenship or democracy. Education towards critical awareness reconciles the marginalized and excluded voices with the democratic process. Political awareness engage citizens with understanding and exercising power. Educators need to see that education is much more than preparation for careers or technical training. Our professional identities are interconnected with our lives in community and our individualities should be situated in the relations that we have with the other.

I advocate that we can resist neoliberalism and its consequences by challenging it through citizenship education and participating in deliberation and decision-making processes in order to achieve a thick form of democracy. I believe that there is always space for democratic critical citizenship education, and participation can be a potent antidote against neoliberal ideology.

In difficult times, it is important to keep the hope high and believe that other possibilities can be created. I frequently take comfort in Freire (1994)'s words, he says "Dreaming is not only a necessary political act, it is an integral part of the historico-social

manner of being a person. It is part of human nature, which, within history, is in permanent process of becoming” (p. 81). He says that in our process of making history, as becoming beings, “there is no change without dream, as there is no dream without hope” (p. 81).

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